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SC upholds validity of UP Madrasa Act

SC overturns Allahabad HC's 2004 ruling, underlines states' role in ensuring standards

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

In a major relief to madrassas in Uttar Pradesh, Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the constitutional validity of the 2004 state law regulating the Muslim minority educational institutions and said a statute cannot be struck down on the ground of secularism.

The significant ruling, which overturned an Allahabad High Court decision, would benefit over 17 lakh students studying in over 16,000 madrassas recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrassa education under the state law.

The High Court had asked for the closure of such institutions and directed the state government to accommodate students in a formal schooling system.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra therefore set aside the High Court verdict quashing the 2004 law on the ground that it was violative of the principle of secularism.

The top court, however, noted the 2004 law to the extent that it sought to regulate higher education, including the "degrees" of "Fazil" and "Kamil" (bachelor and post-graduate level degrees given by madrassas), was beyond the legislative competence of the state legislature as it conflicted provisions of the University Grant Commission (UGC) Act and was therefore unconstitutional.

> **High Court had fallen into error and ended up throwing the baby out with the bathwater**
> --Apex Court

The apex court noted that High Court had fallen into error and ended up "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" by striking down the entire madrassa law on the ground that conferment of such degrees have been held to be unconstitutional due to lack of legislative competence.

The bench noted the government secured the academic interests of students studying in such institutions to pursue higher education.

It also referred to Article 30, which provides that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. —*PTI*

Students at a Madarasa in Eidgah celebrate after SC's ruling, in Lucknow, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

State cannot acquire all private properties: SC

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

In a significant verdict, Supreme Court by a majority of 7:2 on Tuesday held all private properties cannot form part of "material resources of the community" empowering states to take them over for distribution to serve "common good" under the Constitution.

The judgement of the nine-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud provided clarity on the interpretation of Articles 31C and 39(b) of the Constitution, pivotal provisions concerning the rights of individuals against the state's authority to control resources for public good.

The majority ruling has significant implications for laws impacting property and resource distribution, particularly in Maharashtra, where ageing buildings pose severe safety hazards and their restoration was a major issue.

CJI authored the 193-page majority judgement on behalf of six other judges -- Justices Hrishikesh Roy, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Rajesh Bindal, Satish Chandra Sharma, Augustine George Masih -- to decide the two issues.

The vexed legal question, which was decided by the top court, was whether private properties can be considered "material resources of the community" under Article 39(b) and taken over by state authorities for distribution to subserve the "common good".

"The direct question referred to this bench is whether the phrase 'material resources of the community' used in Article 39(b) includes privately-owned resources. Theoretically, the answer is yes, the phrase may include privately owned resources," noted the CJI. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

PHOTO: ANI

Terrorist killed, 2 injured in fresh J&K encounter

SRINAGAR, 5 NOV

An unidentified terrorist was killed while two security personnel were injured in an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district on Tuesday, police said. A gunfight broke out as the terrorists opened fire on the security forces, who retaliated. In the exchange of fire, a terrorist was killed, while an Army jawan and a CRPF trooper were injured, the official said. He added that the injured were taken to a hospital and the operation was underway. —*PTI*

Parliament's winter session from 25 Nov to 20 Dec

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The Winter Session of Parliament is scheduled to begin on 25 November and continue till 20 December, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Tuesday. Rijiju said a special celebration to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution will be held in the Central Hall of the Samvidhan Sadan on 26 November, observed as Constitution Day. Joint Committee on Waqf Amendment Bill is expected to submit its report on 29 November. —*PTI*

Wikipedia under govt lens over complaints of bias

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The Centre has written to Wikipedia noting numerous complaints of bias and inaccuracies in information provided by it, and asked why it should not be treated as a publisher instead of an intermediary, sources said on Tuesday. The communication from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said there is a view that a small group exercises editorial control on its pages. Wikipedia advertises itself as a free online encyclopaedia where volunteers can create or edit pages on personalities, issues or various subjects. The popular online source of information is embroiled in legal cases in India over alleged inaccurate and defamatory content provided by it. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

CHHATH IN TOXIC YAMUNA

A devotee performs rituals on the bank of the Yamuna river as toxic foam floats on the surface of the polluted river during the start of the 4-day Chhath festival, at Kalindi Kunj in New Delhi, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

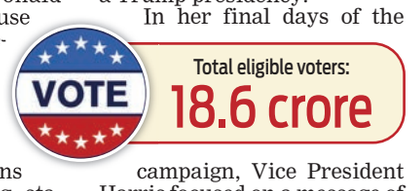
Trump and Harris neck and neck in a historic Presidential poll

WASHINGTON, 5 NOV

The race between Democratic leader Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump for the White House has been truly unprecedented as it saw drama, tragedy, political comebacks, fierce rhetoric and a historically razor-tight contest.

As millions of Americans headed towards polling stations on the big Election Day, many political observers billed the unpredictable race for the 47th president of the US as the most consequential one in decades while appearing to project a grim picture for the country's future under a Trump presidency.

In her final days of the campaign, Vice President Harris focused on a message of hope, unity, optimism and women's rights, Trump remained fiercely combative in targeting his Democratic rival and even suggested that he may not accept the election outcome in case of a defeat.



If Harris wins the race, she will become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to become the US President.

On his part, Trump has maintained his signature aggressive rhetoric and promised to rebuild the economy and rid the US of illegal immigrants. Meanwhile, the S&P 500 was up 0.4 per cent in early trading, inching closer to its record set last month.. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 5, 6 & 7

HD Kumaraswamy **PHOTO: PTI**

UNION MINISTER HDK BOOKED FOR THREATENING COP

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

A case has been registered against Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy based on a complaint by a senior police officer who alleged that the JD(S) leader had threatened him in connection with a mining case probe against him.

Kumaraswamy termed the FIR as "ridiculous and malicious."

The Inspector General of Police M Chandra Sekhar charged the Union Steel and Heavy Industries Minister Kumaraswamy with threatened him -- a government servant -- to prevent him from discharging his duties.

The probe against Kumaraswamy pertains to allegations that he illegally approved a 550-acre mining lease to Sri Sai Venkateswara Minerals (SSVM) in Ballari district in violation of law, during his tenure as Karnataka Chief Minister from 2006 to 2008.

The FIR also named Nikhil and JD(S) legislative party leader Suresh Babu for submitting a complaint to the Chief Secretary against Chandra Sekhar. —*PTI*

HC issues notice to CM over MUDA case

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

Karnataka High Court on Tuesday issued notice to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others on a writ petition filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna seeking a direction to transfer MUDA site allotment case to CBI.

Justice M Nagaprasanna, who also issued notice to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, Union of India, State government, CBI and Lokayukta, directed Lokayukta to place on record the investigation conducted in the case so far. The court posted the next hearing to 26 November.

Meanwhile, Lokayukta police have summoned Siddaramaiah, who is accused number one in the case, for questioning on 6 November. They had on 25 October questioned his wife, who is the accused number two in the case.

The CM is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority.

Parvathi, meanwhile, had written to MUDA to cancel 14 sites allotted to her and the MUDA had accepted it. —*PTI*

Hindus hold massive protest in Canada after 'Khalistani' attack

OTTAWA, 5 NOV

Day after alleged Khalistanis attacked Hindu devotees at a temple in Brampton, Canada, thousands of Indians spilled over the streets on Monday. They took out a solidarity march outside the Hindu Sabha Temple, where the clash took place.

On Sunday, protesters carrying Khalistani flags clashed with people at the Hindu temple and disrupted a consular event co-organised by the temple authorities and the Indian Consulate. Videos online purpotedly showed protesters holding banners in support of Khalistan, as reported by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Protesters were seen carrying Indian flags and shouting slogans against Khalistani extremism **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Protesters were seen carrying Indian flags and shouting slogans against Khalistani extremism.

Police advised people to avoid some areas that were hit by protests such as Tyler Avenue.Incidentally, a Canadian police officer was suspended for participating in a pro-Khalistan protest outside Hindu Sabha temple. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

FIR AGAINST MINISTER'S PA

Belagavi clerk found dead in Tahsildar's room

BELAGAVI, 5 NOV

A 35-year-old Second Division Assistant was found dead inside the chamber of the Tahsildar's office in the district headquarters town on Tuesday, police said.

A detailed investigation will be conducted into the death of Rudranna Yadavannavar, they added.

No death note was recovered, according to police.

"This morning, our inspector received information that an individual had hung himself in the Tahsildar's chambers. We visited the spot. Upon preliminary examination, it was observed that he had hung himself with a veil," a senior police officer stated.

Rudranna Yadavannavar, the 35-yr-old clerk who died **PHOTO: X**

The reason for this extreme step is yet to be determined, he added.

"Based on a complaint from the deceased's wife, a case has been registered, and a thorough investigation will follow. All allegations will be examined," the officer noted.

In her complaint, the wife mentioned a message her husband posted in the Tahsildar office staff's WhatsApp group, stating he would die by suicide around 7.30 pm on 4 November.

The deceased also named three individuals he held responsible for his death—Tahsildar Basavaraj Nagaral, office staff Ashok Kabbaligar, and Somu, the personal assistant to Minister of Women and Child Development, and Disabled and Senior Citizens Empowerment, Lakshmi Hebbalkar, according to the officer.

"We are investigating all allegations made in the complaint, which are also part of the FIR," he added.

As part of the investigation, police are reviewing CCTV footage from the premises to determine the sequence of events. —*PTI*

3 dead after under-construction bullet train bridge collapses in Gujarat

ANAND, 5 NOV

Three of the four workers trapped in the collapse of an under-construction structure for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project near Vasad in Anand district on Tuesday have died. As per the officials, one labourer out of the three trapped under the debris has been rescued and is getting treatment at a hospital.

Anand police and fire brigade officials have reached the spot and the rescue operation is underway.

The bridge is a part of Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project, a 508-kilometer corridor that aims to transform high-speed rail travel in India by connecting two of the country's largest economic hubs with a top speed of 320 km/h.

PHOTO: PTI

After the completion of the corridor, the distance between Mumbai and Ahmedabad will be reduced to about two hours, down from the current six-hour journey by conventional rail. —*ANI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Narcotics worth ₹1.37 crore seized from 2 techies

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

Two techies from Kerala were arrested for allegedly peddling drugs, and MDMA crystals, cocaine and others valued at Rs 1.37 crore were recovered from their possession, police said on Tuesday. The accused are Navneet, 22, and Salin Babu, 31, who were employed as web designers at a private firm. The duo frequented Bengaluru and stayed at a lodge to sell the drugs to prospective customers, City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said. They would place and receive orders through mobile phones, he said. One of the accused was nabbed by Wilson Garden police. ***—Salar News***

Chain snatcher arrested, valuables worth ₹24L seized

CHINTAMANI, 4 NOV

A 45-year-old man accused of snatching gold chains from women on the pretext of asking for an address was arrested in City, police said on Tuesday. Girinagar police recovered 310 grams of stolen ornaments and two bikes valued at Rs 24.15 lakh from the accused, Ajay Kumar, a native of Koliwada in Dharwad district. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda said the accused was a habitual offender and has more than 157 cases registered against him at police stations across State. A complaint was filed by a woman from Banashankari that an unidentified person approached her on a bike while she was entering her house. On the pretext of asking for an address, he snatched her gold chain of 40 grams and sped away, Dayananda said. ***—Salar News***

BSc graduate held for stealing gadgets from PGs

MYSURU, 4 NOV

A BSc graduate who allegedly stole electronic gadgets from Paying Guest (PG) accommodations across KR Puram, Bellandur and Bandepalya in City was arrested, police said on Tuesday. City police recovered stolen valuables, including 16 laptops, four mobile phones and an iPad, totalling Rs 10 lakh from the accused, Naveen Reddy, a native of Andhra Pradesh. He was arrested after a PG owner and residents filed complaints with Bellandur police regarding the theft of laptops. Police tracked down the accused at a PG in Bhoganahalli, and during interrogation, the accused confessed to the crimes. ***—Salar News***

KIA collaborates with Echoes of Earth festival

MYSURU, 4 NOV

Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru will be partnering with Echoes of Earth music festival for the fifth consecutive time, said festival director Roshan Netalkar. According to him, while the seventh edition of the festival spans two days – 7 and 8 December in Bengaluru – throughout November, live performances by some of the artists of the Echoes festival will be featured at both terminals of BLR Airport, including The Quad by BLR and the 080 Lounges.The festival will head to Goa on 1 and 2 February, 2025. This collaboration will also engage young minds through the educational initiatives of BIAL and Echoes of Earth, Namma Shikshana and The Greener Side workshops, focusing on sustainability, conservation, and skill development, said Netalkar. "These workshops will include music and art sessions, learning sustainable waste management practices, and hands-on DIY projects, empowering the next generation with knowledge and tools for a sustainable future," added Netalkar. ***—Salar News***

Excise Minister's office accused of taking ₹16 cr bribe in a day

R Ashoka alleges that there was a ₹700 crore liquor scam in State

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

In a letter to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Chief Secretary and the Lokayukta, the Wine Association alleged that (inset) Excise Minister RB Thimmapur's office is involved in rampant corruption ***PHOTO: X***

Karnataka Wine Merchants' Association alleged that the Excise Minister RB Thimmapur's office has collected Rs 16 crore from various excise department officers by transferring them in and around Bengaluru.

While the Minister refuted the allegation, Opposition BJP got new ammunition to target the ruling Congress. The Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, R Ashoka alleged that there was a Rs 700 crore liquor scam in the State.

In a letter to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Chief Secretary and the Lokayukta, the Association alleged that the Minister's office is involved in rampant corruption.

Explaining further, the Association said about Rs 16 crore has been collected on a single day from three deputy commissioners of excise, nine excise superintendents, 13 deputy superintendents of excise and 20 excise inspectors "for transferring in and around Bengaluru from past 2 to 3.5 years, as their tenure was getting completed within a month."

Naming a deputy commissioner, the letter said the officer was collecting money somewhere between Rs 25 lakh to Rs 40 lakh from each officer for transferring them.

The Association said Rs 2.5 crore to Rs three crore was collected from deputy commissioners (excise) working in Bengaluru.

The association has demanded action against those involved "in this corruption."

"No such thing has happened. You must ask them why they went to pay money. Why would anyone pay if everything is correct?" Thimmapur told reporters at Shiggaon in Haveri district.

He also assured to take action against officers if they have collected money.

He said the Association has alleged that CL7 bar licences were given after collecting a bribe amount of anywhere between Rs 30 lakh to Rs 70 lakh each by the Minister.

In the last one year, 1,000 such illegal licences were given by the excise minister, amounting to Rs 300 crore to Rs 700 crore in corruption, Ashoka alleged.

"After the Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation Scam, MUDA land scam, KIADB land scam, Waqf Scam, this Liquor scam is yet another fresh addition to the series of scams by CM Siddaramaiah led Congress Government in the last 17 months," the BJP leader alleged. *—PTI*

GOVT TO SURVEY LAND 'OWNED' BY EX-SPEAKER

KOLAR, 5 NOV

A survey will be conducted on 64 acres in survey numbers 1 and 2 of Jingalakunte village in Srinivasapur taluk of Kolar district on Wednesday to ascertain the ownership of the lands. While former speaker Ramesh Kumar is claiming ownership of the lands, Forest Department is saying he encroached on their land.

Yedukondalu, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Kolar, said a joint survey was conducted in 2014 and Kumar was not present during that time. There were certain lacunae during the survey and as per a court order, the Union government wrote to Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department to conduct a survey on priority, the DCF said. The Additional Chief Secretary then wrote to Chief Conservator of Forest, and subsequently, Deputy Commissioner of Kolar district directed Deputy Conservator of Forest and Deputy Director of Land Records, Kolar district, to conduct a survey on the disputed lands.

A notice was also issued to Kumar to be present during the survey. *—Salar News*

Waqf case: JPC Chief to visit farmers in Hubballi

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

Jagdambika Pal ***PHOTO: PTI***

Chairperson of Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024 Jagdambika Pal will visit Hubballi and Vijayapura on Thursday to interact with farmers allegedly affected by Waqf Board's "predatory action", BJP MP Tejasvi Surya said on Tuesday.

The response came days after Surya had requested Pal to invite farmers from Vijayapura district as witnesses to discuss their land disputes with Waqf Board. "Chairman will interact with farmer organisations, Mutts and petitions given to him will be placed before JPC," the Bengaluru South MP, who is a member of the Committee, said.

In a 29 October letter, Surya highlighted his recent meeting with a delegation of farmers from Vijayapura district and other areas. "These farmers, who have cultivated their lands for nearly a century, maintain records dating back to the 1920s and 1930s. In recent months, however, many of them have been served notices declaring their lands as Waqf property, without any accompanying evidence or explanation. The scale of these claims is substantial, with nearly 1,500 acres being designated as Waqf property in their village alone," he alleged in his letter to Pal. Following allegations by a section of farmers from Vijayapura district that their lands were marked as Waqf properties, Chief Minister Sidddaramaiah has said none of them will be evicted, and notices issued to them will be withdrawn. *—PTI*

METRO TO GET 24/7 CYBERSECURITY CENTRE IN CITY

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

The Bengaluru Metro will set up a 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) at Byappanahalli to address cyber threats. The chosen firm will be responsible for the full deployment of the SOC, including the supply, installation, configuration, testing, and commissioning of all essential hardware and software components.

This SOC will use an on-premises Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system combined with advanced tools like malware detection, threat intelligence, and automated Security Orchestration, Automation, and Response (SOAR) workflows to strengthen cybersecurity measures. Regular audits and streamlined processes will uphold compliance and support cybersecurity standards. Integration with both open-source and commercial Indicators of Compromise sources will enable visual alert analysis, customisable reporting, and real-time insights. The SOC will also include a Security Data Lake, centralising data for enhanced analytics, visibility, and management. *—Salar News*

FOR BETTER INFRA

Members of the Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha (KPRS) protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Tuesday, demanding the completion of several townships along the NICE (Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises) corridor. NICE corridor was intended to connect Bengaluru and Mysuru ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Deve Gowda campaigns for grandson in Channapatna

CHANNAPATNA, 5 NOV

Deve Gowda is scheduled to address four campaign events till 11 November ***PHOTO: X/@H_D_DEVEGOWDA***

JD(S) patriarch and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda on Tuesday jumped into the campaign fray as he sought support for his grandson and party's candidate Nikhil Kumaraswamy from Channapatna Assembly, which will go for bypolls on 13 November.

Making a rare public appearance in recent months, the 92-year-old leader, who is facing age-related health issues, appealed to people to ensure a big win for Nikhil, which was earlier represented by his son and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy twice.

He said he has several things to say about what he has done for development of Channapatna. Gowda said he will also continue his fight against the water issues faced by the state. *—PTI*

BBMP seals properties of 115 tax defaulters

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

PHOTO:

- BBMP had allowed citizens to settle their arrears through OTS scheme by waiving off 100% of interest and offering a 50% discount.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has sealed 115 properties defaulting on tax since it launched a drive on 29 October to tackle the growing unpaid taxes in City. On Monday, BBMP officials sealed more than 32 shops in Yeshwanthpur over property tax dues.

Since the drive was launched, the officials have locked up 30 properties in West Zone, 17 properties in RR Nagar, 13 in South Zone, eight in Yelahanka and five in Bommanahalli, Dasarahalli and Mahadevapura.

"Notices had been issued to the property owners who have tax arrears despite tenants regularly paying them rent. We had provided them with enough time. Hence, as per the BBMP Act 2020, in the presence of Assistant Revenue Officer, we have sealed these properties," an official from BBMP said on Tuesday.

BBMP had allowed citizens to settle their arrears through One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme by waiving off 100 per cent of compound interest and offering a 50 per cent discount on penalties. *—Salar News*

BWSSB TO HOLD WATER ADALAT ON THURSDAY

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will conduct a Water Adalat this Thursday from 9.30am to 11am. The initiative, held every Thursday, provides a platform for citizens to raise concerns regarding delayed water supply, faulty connections, billing issues, and other service-related grievances.

This week's session will address complaints from residents in AECS-1, Hoodi, HBR Layout, Kacharakanahalli, Kalyan Nagar, Jeevan Bhima Nagar, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bayyapanahalli, CV Raman Nagar, Sadananda Nagar, Magadi Road-1 and 2, Hosahalli, Mysore Road, Kengeri, RR Nagar, Mahalakshmi Layout, Rajajinagar, Nandini Layout, High Grounds, Coles Park, Millers Road, Malleswara and , Yeshwanthpur. *—Salar News*

DEADLINE EXTENDED 4 TIMES

Lack of awareness derailing HSRP plans

BENGALURU, 5 NOV

Even those willing to comply with the HSRP requirement face various challenges ***PHOTO: ANI***

Out of Karnataka's 1.9 crore registered vehicles, only 54 lakh have installed High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) despite State government extending the deadline four times, according to Transport Department.

The slow adoption rate is attributed to a lack of public awareness and challenges faced by vehicle owners, particularly since several vehicle manufacturers have shut down operations in India, a source in Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) in Bengaluru said.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy told Salar News that the government extended the HSRP deadline partly due to ongoing legal disputes and also to give vehicle owners more time to comply.

However, awareness remains a significant barrier, as many vehicle owners are unaware of the HSRP requirements and how to get them installed, sources from Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) in Bengaluru said. Currently, owners must obtain HSRPs through authorised dealers or vehicle manufacturers, which presents another obstacle. "Several manufacturers, including Daewoo, Ambassador, Opel, Fiat, and LML, have exited the Indian market, leaving owners of these vehicles unsure of how to proceed," an RTO official said. Apart from this, Akhila Karnataka Vehicle Number Plates Manufacturers and Sellers Association opposed the mandatory installation of HSRPs in old vehicles and filed a petition with Karnataka Lokayukta in January alleging corruption in the implementation. Even those willing to comply with the HSRP requirement face various challenges, including long waiting times due to supply delays, incorrect data on plates and issues with the online booking system. "Despite submitting the correct details, the registration number on my two-wheeler's plate was embossed incorrectly, and it took multiple visits to the showroom to resolve," said Satish, a resident of Rajajinagar. Citizens can call 9449863429/9449863426 between 10am and 5.30pm if they face any problem in getting the HSRP online. *—Salar News*

BJP LEADER ALLEGES ₹46,292 CR SCAM IN BBMP'S DEVELOPMENT WORK

BJP leader NR Ramesh was detained on Tuesday while protesting against BBMP officials for the alleged misuse of Rs 46,292 crore earmarked for development projects. The protest took place at Corporation Circle in Bengaluru, where Ramesh and supporters raised concerns over the misallocation of funds intended for the city's growth and infrastructure ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

PHOTO: PTI

Sanjay Verma appointed Maharashtra DGP

MUMBAI, 5 NOV

Sanjay Kumar Verma was on Tuesday appointed as the state's new Director General of Police (DGP) in place of Rashmi Shukla, who was removed on a directive of the Election Commission of India (ECI), an official said. Verma, serving as Director General - Legal and Technical, is a 1990-batch IPS officer. He is set to retire in April 2028, the official said. Ahead of 20 November Maharashtra assembly polls, the ECI on Monday ordered that Shukla be removed as the state police chief with immediate effect following complaints from opposition parties. Shukla was the first woman DGP of Maharashtra. Verma will take charge of the post from Mumbai Commissioner of Police Vivek Phansalkar, who was given additional charge as DGP on Monday. *—PTI*

86 false cases filed against media workers: YSRCP

AMARAVATI, 5 NOV

YSR Congress Party on Tuesday claimed that as many as 86 cases have been filed against its social media activists during the past three days. The Opposition party, in a press statement, said the activists have been vocal about government shortcomings on social media and alleged that they are being targeted with false cases and subjected to police harassment. The social media activists from these regions have been accused of "tarnishing the government's image," a vague allegation often used to justify arrests, the party added. The release stated that YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy took a stand against the detention of social media activists, calling it a violation of fundamental rights and a direct assault on the Constitution. *—PTI*

CBI forms SIT to probe laddu controversy

AMARAVATI, 5 NOV

CBI has formed an independent SIT to conduct a probe into allegations of use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus, following the Supreme Court's direction. The team comprises five officials - two from the central agency, two from Andhra Pradesh Police and one from FSSAI. According to Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, the state government has nominated senior IPS officers Sarvashresth Tripathi and Gopinath Jetti for the CBI Director-monitored Special Investigation Team. *—PTI*

4 held for hurling petrol bomb at Punjab Shiv Sena

LUDHIANA, 5 NOV

Four people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in a petrol bomb attack at the residence of a Shiv Sena (Hind) leader, police said on Tuesday. The petrol bomb was hurled at the residence of Shiv Sena (Hind) leader Harkirat Singh Khurana on 2 November. No one was injured in the incident. One of the arrested accused, Manish, was getting instructions from foreign-based hardcore terrorist of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) Harjit Singh alias Laddi. The remaining three accused were identified as Ravinderpal Singh, Amit and Jaswinder Singh. Another accused, Lovepreet Singh, is on the run, police said. The four arrested accused were also involved in hurling a petrol bomb at the residence of Shiv Sena (Bharat Vanshi) leader Yogesh Bakshi on 16 October. *—PTI*

'Canada gives political space to extremists'

In an official visit to Australia, EAM condemns Khalistanis' attack on Hindu devotees

CANBERRA, 5 NOV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday took a strong exception to the Hindu temple incident in Brampton and said it tells in a way the "political space" which is being given to "extremist forces" in Canada.

He said this in response to queries related to the incident that took place in Canada on Sunday and the ongoing diplomatic row between India and Canada, during a joint press briefing with his Australian counterpart Penny Wong here.

In Canada's Brampton, protestors carrying Khalistani flags clashed with people at the Hindu Sabha temple on Sunday and disrupted a consular event co-organised by the temple authorities and the Indian Consulate.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong during the 15th India - Australia Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, in Canberra, Australia, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

> **We have a principled position in relation to matters such as the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and also, frankly, the sovereignty of all countries**
>
> -Penny Wong, Australian Foreign Minister

"You would have seen a statement first by our official spokesperson and also the expression of concern by our Prime Minister," Jaishankar told reporters in Canberra.

The external affairs minister is on an official visit to Australia from 3-7 November.

"Let me make three comments, one, Canada has developed a pattern of making allegations without providing specifics. Secondly, when we look at Canada, for us, the fact that...our diplomats under surveillance, is something which is unacceptable," Jaishankar said.

"The third is the incident which the gentleman spoke about, do look at the video. I think that will tell in a way the political space which is being given to extremist forces there," the EAM said.

The development comes as India-Canada ties remain deeply troubled over the North American country's alleged support to Khalistani separatists and its accusation of India's involvement in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen who has been designated a terrorist by India.

Australia's foreign minister raised allegations with her Indian counterpart that India has targeted Sikh activists in Canada.

"We convey our views to India as you would expect us to do and we have a principled position in relation to matters such as the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and also, frankly, the sovereignty of all countries," she added.

Wong said her message to the Sikh community was that people have a right to be safe and respected in Australia, regardless of who they are. *—PTI*

POLL BATTLE

Sharad Pawar hints at retirement

PUNE, 5 NOV

Hinting at retirement from parliamentary politics, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said he will have to think about whether he should seek another Rajya Sabha term after his current tenure ends in 2026.

Speaking at a campaign rally for grand-nephew Yugendra Pawar at Supa in Baramati assembly constituency in the district, the 83-year-old leader said he has to stop at some point and make way for the new leadership.

He has won 14 elections during his political career, noted the veteran leader who first entered the Maharashtra assembly in 1967 and was made a minister in the state government five years later.

Some years ago, he decided not to contest Lok Sabha elections as he wanted to give

Shiv Sena (UBT) expels 5 functionaries

MUMBAI, 5 NOV

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has expelled five functionaries for `anti-party activities', sources said on Tuesday.

Rupesh Mhatre, one of those who faced the axe, is a former MLA, and had filed nomination papers as an independent from Bhiwandi East assembly seat. Vishwas Nandekar, a party functionary from Yavatmal district, Chandrakant Ghughal, Sanjay Awari and Prasad Thackeray were also expelled on Monday for anti-party activities.

With the last date of withdrawal of nominations expiring, Maharashtra BJP chiefChandrashekar Bawankule on Tuesday said the party will crack the whip against rebels and suspend them for six years.

> **Maharashtra assembly poll is a fight between those who love the state and the ones who betray it**
>
> - Udhhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena(UBT) President

FIR against Sanjay Raut's brother for remarks against Shiv Sena's woman leader

Mumbai police have registered an FIR against Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Sunil Raut, the brother of party leader Sanjay Raut, for allegedly making offensive remarks against rival Shiv Sena leader Suvarna Karanje, an official said. Sena (UBT) candidate allegedly made the comments at an event on 27 October. *—PTI*

To 'bulldoze' mafia bring BJP to power in J'khand: UP CM

RANCHI, 5 NOV

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday accused the JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of "patronising" mafia and urged people to vote for BJP which would "bulldoze" them.

Adityanath also claimed that such actions were being taken against the mafia in his home state Uttar Pradesh.

He also asserted that it is the BJP that can "guarantee security and safety" to people.

"The JMM-led coalition is patronising mafia in sectors, such as land, sand, forest, mining and liquor, in Jharkhand...Like UP, bring the BJP to power in Jharkhand to bulldoze mafia," he claimed while addressing an election rally in Koderma. Adityanath also alleged, "Like Aurangzeb looted the country's wealth and destroyed temples, the JMM-led coalition and its ministers, including Alamgir Alam, looted Jharkhand's people."

Elections to the 81-member Jharkhand assembly will be held on 13 and 20 November, and the counting of votes will take place on 23 November.

JMM seeks President's intervention after Soren's chopper take-off delay

The ruling JMM in Jharkhand has sought President Droupadi Murmu's intervention to ensure a level-playing field for star campaigners in the upcoming assembly polls, alleging that Chief Minister Hemant Soren's helicopter was not allowed to take off for one-and-a-half hours in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the state on 4 November. *—PTI*

Mining scam: CBI searches 16 locations

The CBI conducted searches at 16 locations in three states including poll-bound Jharkhand in connection with the state's illegal stone mining scam in Nimbu Pahar in which an alleged political aide of Chief Minister Hemant Soren is under the scanner, officials said. The central probe agency conducted searches in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar. It launched an operation at 11 locations in Jharkhand's Sahibganj, three in Ranchi, and one each in Patna and Kolkata at the premises of suspects and their associates, the officials said. CBI has recovered Rs 50 lakh cash, one kilogram gold and one kilogram of silver besides property documents worth crores.

Former UP MP Kadir among 30 booked for MCC violation

PALAKKAD, 5 NOV

More than 30 people, including former MP Kadir Rana, have been booked for holding election meetings at Chuhapur village here in violation of the model code of conduct in place for 20 November Meerapur Assembly bypoll, a police official said on Tuesday.

Superintendent of Police (rural) Aditya Bansal said the case has been registered against more than 30 people, including Rana and 11 other named accused, for holding an election meeting in support of Samajwadi Party candidate Sumbul Rana without permission on Monday evening.

Sumbul Rana is the daughter-in-law of Kadir Rana who was the BSP MP from Muzaffarnagar from 2009 to 2014. *—PTI*

Wayanad people will ask me not to come there often: Priyanka

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the UDF candidate in the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll, said that it will be the people of the hill constituency who will ultimately decide if they want her to stay in Delhi, instead of visiting frequently. Priyanka made this remark in response to her rival candidates' suggesting that she would rarely be seen in Wayanad. *—PTI*

Palakkad: After attack, Sarin starts 'handshake campaign'

PALAKKAD, 5 NOV

The ruling CPI(M)'s independent candidate in the Palakkad by-poll, P Sarin, launched a "handshake campaign" on Tuesday to highlight his Congress rival Rahul Mamkootathil's recent decision to refuse a handshake at an event here.

A day ago, at a marriage function, Congress MP from Vadakara Shafi Parambil and Youth Congress state president Mamkootathil greeted former party leader A V Gopinathan, but did not shake the hand offered by Sarin. Referring to the incident, Sarin said, "It (the handshake campaign) will help us to gauge the public reaction to what happened and also whether people think we did anything wrong. *—PTI*

Committed to caste census, Rahul in Hyd

HYDERABAD, 5 NOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he is fully committed to ensuring caste census in Telangana and in making the state a model for caste census in the country.

Addressing a Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee meeting here, ahead of the commencement of caste survey from 6 November by the state government, he said caste census is the first process to be taken up to assess the extent and nature of discrimination.

"So, I am fully committed to ensuring not only the caste census happens in Telangana, but that Telangana becomes a model for the caste census in the country," he said.

Furthermore, he said caste discrimination in India was "unique" and probably among worst in the world and asserted, "will demolish artificial barrier of 50 per cent reservations in country."

Rahul Gandhi PHOTO: PTI

Gandhi further said there may be some shortcomings in the caste survey to be taken up by the state government. However, these will be sorted out.

Taking potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said he wondered why the PM has not publicly said that he wanted to challenge the idea of discrimination in India.

He said he has committed in Parliament on behalf of Congress to conduct a national caste census. *—PTI*

Houses of those giving shelter to terrorists will be razed: J&K LG

SRINAGAR, 5 NOV

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha warned on Tuesday that the houses of those providing shelter to terrorists would be razed to the ground as he asked to stand up against perpetrators of terror.

He also said if security forces, the Union Territory administration and people come together, then terrorism could be eliminated from the region in a year.

"I have directed the forces not to harm any innocent but the culprits will not be spared. If anyone provides shelter to terrorists, then his house will be razed to the ground. There will be no compromise on it," the LG said at a function in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

If Vajpayee was alive, J&K would not be UT: Omar

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that if Atal Bihari Vajpayee was alive, the state would have never been reduced to a Union Territory. He "always tried to improve the situation in J&K", Omar added.

"After he left, his approach was forgotten. The design he had given was forgotten. What can we do?" he said.

Meanwhile, Omar's two sons Zahir and Zamir watched the legislative assembly proceedings for the first t ime on Tuesday. In their 20s, Omar's sons with his estranged wife Payal Nath, are lawyers.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha PHOTO: PTI

MLAs told to off phones during House session

Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather asked all the MLAs to keep their mobile phones switched off during House proceedings to uphold the sanctity of the legislature. *—PTI*

Jal Jeevan scam: Ex-minister, 22 others booked

JAIPUR, 5 NOV

Anti-Corruption Bureau of Rajasthan has registered a case against former minister Mahesh Joshi and 22 others in connection with the Jal Jeevan Mission scam, a top official said on Tuesday.

Director General, Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB), Ravi Prakash Mehrada, said the FIR was registered two-three days back.

Joshi was the cabinet minister for the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) in the previous Congress government.

The scam pertains to alleged financial irregularities and corruption in awarding contracts related to the scheme.

The central government's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through household tap connections and is being implemented in Rajasthan by PHED. *—ANI*

MEETS LS SPEAKER

Oppn protests against Wafq 'unilateral' decisions

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Opposition members in the parliamentary committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday to register their protest against alleged "unilateral" decisions being taken by panel chairman and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal.

They said the Speaker heard them patiently and assured them of a decision at the earliest.

"It was a very nice discussion. He was very kind to us. The Speaker has very patiently heard us and said he will look into the matter," TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said.

Om Birla PHOTO: PTI

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh and DMK MP A Raja spoke on similar lines.

"It was a fruitful meeting, the Speaker assured us of looking into our grievances," he said.

The MPs also submitted a memorandum to the Speaker detailing their concerns.

According to sources, the MPs submitted a letter to the Speaker, signed by Opposition MPs including Congress's Mohammad Jawed and Imran Masood, DMK's Raja, AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi, AAP's Sanjay Singh and TMC's Kalyan Banerjee.

Opposition MPs have accused Pal, the chairperson of the committee scrutinising the Bill, of taking "unilateral decisions" on fixing the dates of sittings -- which were at times for three consecutive days -- and whom to call as witnesses.

The committee's proceedings have been stormy amid frequent protests from opposition members over a host of issues, while BJP members have accused them of deliberately trying to scuttle its work. *—PTI*

AP HM says she takes Pawan's remarks 'positively'

AMARAVATI, 5 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha on Tuesday said she viewed Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's remarks on her handling of the state's law and order situation in a constructive way.

Anitha's response followed Kalyan's criticism the previous day over deteriorating law and order conditions and increased violence against women, particularly five months into the tenure of the new coalition government comprising the TDP, BJP, and Janasena.

"I took his (Kalyan's) comments positively. His press meet was, in fact, encouraging. He provided a supportive foundation for my work and urged me to be even more assertive. That's what he communicated," Anitha told reporters.

Anitha added that, as the Home Minister, she recognises her responsibilities and the demands of her role.

She also emphasised that Kalyan did not label her a failure. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'Bihar Kokila' folk singer Sharda dies at 72

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Bihar's folk icon Sharda Sinha,72, died on Tuesday. Known for her Chhath songs, the Padma Bhushan recipient was admitted to AIIMS Hospital in New Delhi on 27 October. Her son, Anshuman Sinha, who had been sharing updates on her health on social media, confirmed the news on Instagram. Fondly known as the "Bihar Kokila" (Nightingale of Bihar), Sinha's influence on Indian folk music brought the traditional sounds of Bihar to national and international audiences. She had been battling multiple myeloma since 2018. Sinha was known for songs such as 'Kartik Maas Ijoriya', 'Koyal Bin', 'Taar Bijli' from 'Gangs of Wasseypur- II' and 'Babul' from 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun'. *—PTI*

Cop killed while trying to catch liquor-laden SUV

SURENDRANAGAR, 5 NOV

A 50-year-old policeman was killed while trying to intercept an SUV allegedly involved in bootlegging in Gujarat's Surendranagar district in the wee hours of Tuesday, police said. The accident occurred near Kathada village on Dasada-Patdi road around 2.30 am, an official said. Acting on a tip-off, sub-inspector JM Pathan, attached to the state monitoring cell (SMC), tried to intercept an SUV allegedly used for smuggling liquor, a release stated. Pathan and other members of the SMC were standing on a turn blocking the road when a suspected SUV approached them. But the vehicle and a trailer behind it managed to pass the turning, it said. However, when the officer tried to move out of the way of another oncoming SUV, he was blinded by its headlight and banged against the back of the trailer, he said. *—PTI*

Temple idols found desecrated in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, 5 NOV

Navagraha idols in a temple at Shamshabad were found damaged on Tuesday, leading to the detention of a person, police said. After hearing about the damage at the Hanuman temple, locals gathered to protest and condemn the incident. The temple priest expressed distress over the incident and called for strict action against those responsible. He said a devotee informed him around 6am that idols were damaged, and he observed that five Navagraha idols had been vandalised. A senior police official stated that police teams arrived at the scene after receiving information and launched an investigation. One suspect was detained in connection with the incident, and discussions are underway with the local temple committee. *—PTI*

Project to restore 4,500 hectares of Sundarbans

KOLKATA, 5 NOV

A private sector-supported project has been taken up to restore 4,500 hectares of degraded mangroves in West Bengal's Sundarbans, an official said on Tuesday. The programme also seeks to create sustainable economic opportunities for villages in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove ecosystem. Senior officials of project partners EcoAct and Meensou India are currently on a visit to the restoration sites and engaging with communities in the South 24 Parganas district of the state. The restoration effort will help revitalise crucial habitats for the iconic Royal Bengal Tiger and protect over 1,400 other species that call the Sundarbans their home . *—PTI*

Muslims, Oppn welcome SC's madrassa law verdict

Muslim leaders say madrassas have given IAS, IPS and ministers

LUCKNOW, 5 NOV

Muslim religious leaders and Opposition parties on Tuesday welcomed a Supreme Court order upholding the validity of the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrassa Education Act and said it is wrong to look at the seminaries with suspicion.

If the government wants that there should be some improvement in madrassas, then it should sit with the stakeholders concerned and discuss it. Any unconstitutional decision will be fought legally, Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind's legal advisor Maulana Kab Rashidi said.

In a big relief to madrassas in Uttar Pradesh, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the 2004 Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrassa Education Law, 2004 and set aside an Allahabad High Court verdict quashing it on the ground that it was violative of the principle of secularism.

Maulana Noorul Hasan Azhari and advocates react after Supreme Court's verdict on UP Madarsa Education Act in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Senior member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali said now madrassas can run with complete freedom.

"How can a law made by the government be unconstitutional? Thousands of people are associated with these madrassas and the Supreme Court's decision has given them great relief," he said.

Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind's Rashidi said the COURT upheld the Act while protecting the spirit of the Constitution.

"If the government wants that there should be some improvement in modern education in madrassas, then we can sit together and discuss it. But if it imposes something unconstitutional, then it will be fought legally," he added.

All India Shia Personal Law Board spokesperson Maulana Yasoob Abbas said madrassas have played an important role in the country's independence struggle and given the country many IAS, IPS, ministers and governors There are about 17 lakh madrassa students in Uttar Pradesh.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati said the court order has ended the uncertainty over the future of madrassas. Samajwadi Party targeted BJP, saying madrassas were established legally after independence. *—PTI*

Property case: Judges criticise CJI's rubuke to Justice Krishna

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Justice BV Nagarathna of the Supreme Court and other judges on Tuesday expressed strong reservations over Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud criticising former Supreme Court judges, including Justice VR Krishna Iyer, for their views on whether private property can be taken over by the State to subserve the common good.

The majority judgement did not agree with the view expressed by Justice Krishna Iyer in the case of Ranganatha Reddy of 1978 wherein it was held that private properties could be regarded as community resources.

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, however, wrote "This court is unable to subscribe to the expansive view adopted in the minority judgement authored by Justice

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Krishna Iyer in Ranganatha Reddy and subsequently relied on by this court in Sanjeev Coke. Not every resource owned by an individual can be considered a 'material resource of the community' merely because it meets the qualifier of 'material needs'." The bench, in its conclusions, upheld Article 31C, which provided immunity to certain laws from judicial scrutiny, "to the extent that it was upheld in Kesavananda Bharati v Union of India remains in force".

The majority verdict said the single-sentence observation in the Mafatlal case that "material resources of the community" included privately-owned resources was not part of the "ratio decidendi" (rationale for the decision) and hence, not binding on the nine-judge bench. The top court, however, did not deal with the validity of Chapter VIII-A of the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) Act which was inserted in 1986 to empower state authorities to acquire cessed buildings and the land on which those are built if 70 per cent of the occupants make such a request for restoration purposes. The case stemmed from Mumbai, where many pre-1940 structures had become increasingly unsafe due to factors like age, overuse, and damage from environmental conditions. *—PTI*

SC junks plea against Sushant's house help

Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the Centre's appeal against an order that quashed a look out circular (LOC) issued to the former house help of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The bench dismissed the appeal noting no one had appeared in the case when the matter came up for hearing. Centre had challenged the 10 April Bombay High Court order quashing the LOC issued by the CBI against Samuel Miranda.

Porsche crash: SC denies bail to minor's dad

Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to grant anticipatory bail to a man in the Porsche car accident, which claimed two lives, in Pune earlier this year. The bench declined to interfere with a Bombay High Court order that had denied anticipatory bail to Arunkumar Devnath Singh, the father of the minor driver's friend. The applicant's minor son was allegedly in the rear seat of the luxury car, which was reportedly being driven by another minor.

'Overcrowding caused bus crash that killed 36'

DEHRADUN, 5 NOV

Overcrowding, speeding and technical faults were among the reasons that might have led to the bus accident in Almora, according to the ill-fated vehicle's surviving passengers, many of whom are undergoing treatment at different hospitals here.

The packed-beyond-capacity bus carrying passengers returning to work after Deepavali fell into a deep gorge in Uttarakhand's Almora on Monday, killing at least 36 of the more than 60 people on board.

Twenty-seven people were injured, four of them critically, when the 43-seater bus, operated by the private Garhwal Motor Owners Union, was on its way from Pauri in Garhwal region to Ramnagar in Kumaon about 250 km away.

Karan, who is among the five being treated at the Ramdutt Joshi Hospital in Ramnagar, said, "There were 60-65 people in the 32-seater bus. We suddenly heard a sound that seemed like a tyre burst and the bus fell into the gorge."

"It was obviously overloaded. At least 20 passengers were standing in the bus since all the seats were occupied," he said. Another passenger too claimed that the vehicle was packed beyond capacity.

"Apart from overcrowding, the poor condition of the roads may also have led to the accident. The driver too seemed to be in a hurry," said Vinod Pokhriyal, another injured passenger at the hospital.

. *—PTI*

Salman threatened for Rs 5 cr, Hubballi man suspected

MUMBAI, 5 NOV

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has received a fresh threat along with a demand of Rs 5 crore from a person claiming to be the brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, police officials said on Tuesday.

A 35-year-old suspect was tracked down at Hubballi in Karnataka and a police team has reached there though no arrest has been made yet, they said.

The threat message, which also asked Khan to apologise apparently over the 1998 blackbuck poaching incident, was received on the WhatsApp helpline of the Mumbai traffic police control room located in Worli late Monday night, an official said. The message sender claimed he is the brother of Lawrence Bishnoi, he said.

"If Salman Khan wants to stay alive, he should go to our (Bishnoi community) temple and apologise or pay Rs 5 crore. If he does not do so, we will kill him; our gang is still active," the message said.

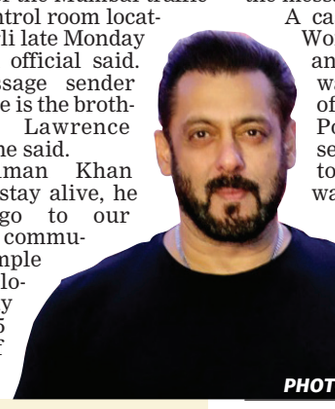


PHOTO: ANI

A case was registered at Worli Police Station, and Khan's security was also beefed up, the official said. Worli Police tracked the sender of the message to Hubballi. A team was sent to the southern state which zeroed in on the man, a welder by profession, he said.

The man is suspected to have sent the threat message, and the police team was questioning him though he has not been detained or arrested yet, the official added.

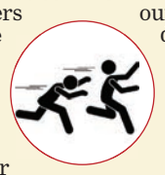
Salman Khan has received similar threats earlier. On 29 October, a man sent a threat message to the same traffic police helpline, threatening to kill Khan and city NCP leader Zeeshan Siddique if they failed to pay Rs 2 crore.

The sender warned that the two will meet the same fate as former state minister Baba Siddique, Zeeshan's father. *—PTI*

RG KAR PROTESTERS CHASED BY 80 MISCREANTS, POLICE NO SHOW

KOLKATA, 5 NOV

An investigation was started after a group of persons demonstrating over the rape and murder of the RG Kar hospital doctor alleged that they were chased by 70-80 people on two-wheelers for kilometres in the heart of Kolkata in an incident of road rage, police said on Tuesday.



The incident took place on Monday after a rally protesting the doctor's death got over at the Rashbehari Crossing, the complainants alleged.

The protesters claimed that they had an argument with a group of people heading for Kali Pooja immersion over blocking one of their cars, following which they were chased by 70-80 people on two-wheelers till the Exide Crossing.

"All the way from Rashbehari till Exide Crossing, they kept banging our car's windows and doors, asking us to step out. We have videographed the entire episode," one of the protestors said.

"Despite repeated calls to the Shakespeare Sarani police station and the Maidan police station, there was no response. We finally dialled 100 when a few policemen arrived, but by then, the accused had fled," he added. *—PTI*

'INACCURACY TROUBLING'

Wikipedia under govt lens over complaints of bias

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The Centre has written to Wikipedia noting numerous complaints of bias and inaccuracies in information provided by it, and asked why it should not be treated as a publisher instead of an intermediary, sources said on Tuesday.

The communication from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said there is a view that a small group exercises editorial control on its pages.

Wikipedia advertises itself as a free online encyclopaedia where volunteers can create or edit pages on personalities, issues or various subjects.

The popular online source of information is embroiled in legal cases in India over alleged inaccurate and defamatory content provided by it.

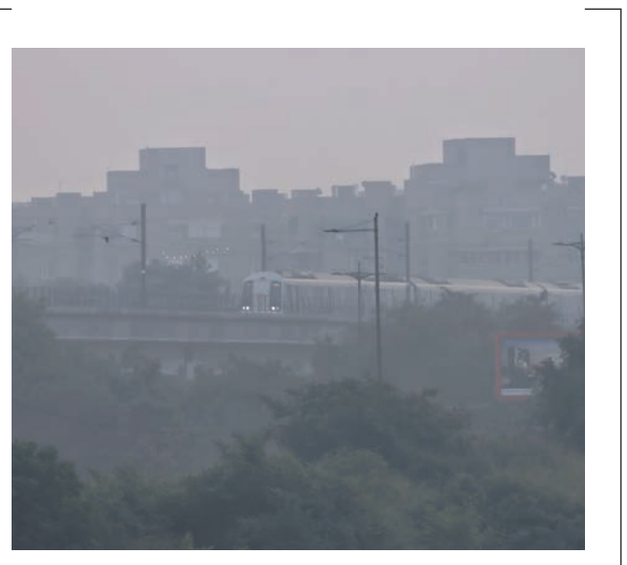
The notice comes amid a legal battle in the Delhi High Court, in which news agency Asian News International (ANI) has demanded information about users who made alleged defamatory edits to an entry about the firm. On Friday, in the most recent hearing in this case, the court quizzed Wikipedia reps over its claim of being a "free encyclopaedia" and observed the website could not refuse to provide the information sought since it claims to be an 'intermediary' and not a 'publisher' of information.

"If you are an intermediary, why are you bothered? If somebody else has edited and that addition is without basis, then it comes down. They are not here to protect..." Justice Subramonium Prasad said, according to legal news website Bar and Bench.

The court also noted that it was "troubling" that Wikipedia claimed to be an encyclopaedia while also warning it does not endorse its content.

Earlier in September, in a separate hearing on the same matter, Delhi High Court issued a contempt of court notice to Wikipedia after ANI accused the platform of failing to comply with orders to disclose information on subscribers who made allegedly defamatory edits on Wikipedia page.

The court warned Wikipedia against non-compliance with Indian laws, declaring "if you don't like India, please don't work in India... we will ask government to block your site." *—PTI*



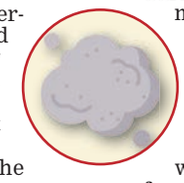
Severe air quality readings between 400 and 500 affect healthy people *PHOTO: PTI*

Delhi a gas chamber as air turns severe

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Delhiites continued to breathe toxic air on Tuesday as the air quality edged closer to the severe zone in some areas.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 384 at 9am, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).



The 24-hour average AQI, recorded until 4 pm daily was reported at 381 on Monday, the second highest in the country.

Data from the CPCB's Sameer app, which provides hourly AQI updates, showed that out of the 38 monitoring stations, 13 were in the severe category with readings above 400.

Severe air quality readings between 400 and 500 affect healthy people and seriously impact those with existing diseases, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

According to AQI classifications, 0-50 range is 'good,' 51-100 is 'satisfactory,' 101-200 is 'moderate,' 201-300 is 'poor,' 301-400 is 'very poor,' and 401-500 is 'severe.'

The weather office has forecast mainly clear skies during the day, with the maximum temperature expected to reach around 33 degrees Celsius.

A campaign to discourage open burning of waste will begin in Delhi from Wednesday in view of the rising air pollution, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said.

Addressing a press conference, Rai said 588 teams from different civic agencies, including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), will be deployed on field to report open burning incidents across the city. *—PTI*

DRIED BLOOD STAINS

Flies on suspect's clothes crack murder case

JABALPUR, 5 NOV

The flies stuck on the clothes worn by a 19-year-old suspect have led the police to solve a murder case in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district, officials said on Tuesday.

The suspect, Dharam Thakur, was arrested for allegedly killing his uncle Manoj Thakur alias Mannu, 26, after a dispute over money, police told reporters on Monday.

The victim left home on 30 October for work but did not return. The body was found lying at an agriculture field in Deori Tapria village on 31 October.

Dubey said the accused was the last person spotted with the victim at a market in Chargawan area.

- The victim left home on 30 October for work but did not return. The body was found lying at an agriculture field in Deori Tapria village on 31 October.

The accused, who was present in the crowd at the murder scene, had reddened eyes and some marks were visible on his chest, police told PTI on Tuesday.

"While questioning regarding the person's whereabouts, I spotted that flies kept sticking to some of his clothes, which led to a suspicion about blood stains. Since he was wearing dark clothes, the blood stains were not visible," he said.

The official said he got clothes of the accused examined by a forensic team present at the spot and it was ascertained that there were blood stains on them.

The investigation indicated the accused was last spotted with the deceased in a market at Chargawan where they purchased liquor and chicken.

They later had a dispute over the contribution of money spent on those items.

The accused allegedly hit the victim with an object having nails on it and ran away.

The victim suffered grievous injuries and died. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

HIPPO VOTES FOR TRUMP

On the eve of US election, Thailand's viral pygmy hippo Moo Deng "predicted" the results of the presidential contest between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. Given the choice of two fruit cakes carved with the candidates' names, the baby hippo went down munched on the one marked for the Trump
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

US to decide on 10 life & death ballot measures

While electing officials to make and enforce laws, voters in dozens of states are also deciding on more than 140 ballot proposals affecting the way people legally live, work and die.

As 10 states consider measures related to abortion or reproductive rights on Tuesday's ballots, about a half-dozen states are weighing the legalization of marijuana for either recreational or medical use.

About two dozen measures are focused on future elections, including several specifically barring noncitizens voting. Other state measures affect wages, taxes, housing and education.

Many of the ballot measures were initiated by citizen petitions that sidestep state legislatures, though others were placed before voters by lawmakers.

About two dozen measures are focused on future elections, including several specifically barring noncitizens voting ***PHOTO: X***

Marijuana legalisation
Voters in Florida, North Dakota and South Dakota are deciding whether to legalise recreational marijuana for adults. The election marks the third vote on the issue in both North Dakota and South Dakota. In Nebraska, voters are considering a pair of measures that would legalise medical marijuana and regulate the industry.

About half the states currently allow recreational marijuana and about a dozen more allow medical marijuana.

In Massachusetts, a ballot measure would legalize the possession and supervised use of natural psychedelics, including psilocybin mushrooms. It would be the third state to do so, following Oregon and Colorado.

Immigration
An Arizona measure crafted amid a surge in immigration would make it a state crime to enter from a foreign country except through official ports of entry, and for someone already in the US illegally to apply for public benefits using false documents. The border crossing measure is similar to a challenged Texas law that the US Justice Department says violates federal authority.

School choice
A proposed amendment to the Kentucky Constitution would allow lawmakers to use state funds for private schools. A Colorado measure would create a constitutional right to school choice for K-12 students. A majority of states offers some sort of state-backed program to help cover private school costs.

Sports betting
Missouri voters are deciding whether to become the latest to legalise sports betting. A total of 38 states and Washington, DC, already allow sports betting, which has expanded rapidly since the US Supreme Court cleared the way for it in 2018.

Taxes
A Colorado proposal would make it the second state after California to impose a sales tax on firearms and ammunition, with revenue going primarily to crime victims' services. The federal government already taxes sales of guns and ammunition.

North Dakota voters are considering a measure to eliminate property taxes. If approved, local governments could need more than $3 billion biennially in replacement revenue from the state.

Housing
California voters are deciding whether to repeal a 1995 law limiting local rent control ordinances. If approved, it would open the way for local governments to expand limitations on the rates that landlords could charge.

A unique proposal in Arizona links property taxes with responses to homelessness. It would let property owners seek property tax refunds if they incur expenses because a local government declined to enforce ordinances against illegal camping, loitering, panhandling, public alcohol and drug use, and other things.

Climate
Voters in Washington state are considering whether to repeal a 2021 law that caps carbon emissions and creates a market for businesses exceeding the mark to purchase allowances from others. Washington was the second state to launch such a programme, after California.

Citizen voting
Republican-led legislatures in eight states — Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Wisconsin — have proposed state constitutional amendments declaring that only citizens can vote.

A 1996 US law prohibits noncitizens from voting in federal elections, and many states already have similar laws. But Republicans have emphasized the potential of noncitizens voting after an influx of immigrants at US-Mexican border.

Voting methods
Connecticut voters are considering whether to authorise no-excuse absentee voting, joining most states that already allow it.

Arizona voters are deciding between competing ballot proposals that would require either open primaries with candidates of all parties or the state's current method of partisan primaries.

If conflicting measures both pass, the provision receiving the most votes takes effect, but that could be up to a court to decide.

Redistricting
An Ohio initiative would create a citizens commission to handle redistricting for US House and state legislative seats, taking the task away from elected officials.

Minimum wage
Ballot measures in Missouri and Alaska would gradually raise minimum wages to USD 15 an hour while also requiring paid sick leave.

A California measure would incrementally raise the minimum wage for all employers to USD 18 an hour.

Assisted suicide
West Virginia voters are deciding whether to amend the state constitution to prohibit medically assisted suicide. The measure would run counter to 10 states and Washington, DC, where physician-assisted suicide is allowed. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

People of Harris' ancestral village eager to see her win

An air of excitement and expectancy pervades the Thulasendrapuram village in the district hoping that Democrat Kamala Harris, current vice president, wins in the US presidential elections.

The villagers have performed prayers at the Sri Dharma Sastha temple in her ancestral village expecting her to trounce former president and Republican Donald Trump, and emerge victorious as Americans vote today to elect their next president.

Thulasendrapuram is the ancestral village of Kamala's grandfather and former Indian diplomat P V Gopalan. Her mother Shyamala was Gopalan's daughter.

The village hogged the limelight in August 2020 when Kamala was nominated as the Democrat vice president candidate, and it later celebrated her victory the same year.

"Our sincere prayers are for the victory of the daughter of the soil in the election and to become the president of the most influential country in the world," says councillor Arulmozhi and her spouse T Sudhakar, who have organised a special abishekam of sandalwood and turmeric, besides a special 'archanai' to the presiding deity at the Sri Dharma Sastha temple, the family deity of Kamala's ancestors.

Women walk past a banner, asking people to join a special victory prayer for Kamala Harris, at her ancestral village of Thulesendrapuram in Mannargudi district ***PHOTO: PTI***

They have erected a massive banner carrying her picture, wishing her success in the election.

Similar prayers filled the air in Madurai where Anushanathin Anugraham, a spiritual organisation, held a special prayer on 4 November.

If Kamala wins in the poll, then the village leaders in Painganadu in the district will offer 'annadhanam' (free food) to the poor.

"Her ancestors are from our village .. she is a woman fighting for the big post and we want her to win," says Arulmozhi.

Kamala's maternal grandfather Gopalan was born in this village before moving to Chennai. He had contributed nearly Rs one lakh to the Sri Dharma Sastha temple.

A donation of Rs 5,000 was made to the temple towards its Kumbhabhishekam (consecration) in the name of Kamala Harris in 2014, indicating her connection to the temple, though no one from her family lives in the village today.

Her donation prompted the temple authorities to inscribe her name on a stone tablet containing the list of donors to the shrine. *—PTI*

Hindu priests perform rituals during special prayers for the victory of Kamala Harris at Palvancha, Telangana; Supporters of Harris who have come all the way from the USA participate in a special pooja in Harris' ancestral village of Thulasendrapuram, in Thiruvaarur district ***PHOTOS: PTI***

'Russia & Iran are ramping up influence campaigns targeting US voters'

US intelligence reveals that Russia-linked influence actors are manufacturing videos and creating fake articles to undermine the legitimacy of the election, instill fear in voters regarding the election process ***PHOTO: PTI***

The nation's federal law enforcement and election security agencies are debunking two new examples of Russian election disinformation on the eve of Election Day, highlighting attempts by foreign actors to sow doubt in the US voting process and warning that the efforts run the risk of inciting violence against election officials.

In a joint statement late Monday, federal officials pointed to a recent article posted by Russian actors falsely claiming that US officials across presidential swing states were orchestrating a plan to commit fraud, as well as a video that falsely depicted an interview with an individual claiming election fraud in Arizona.

US intelligence reveals that Russia-linked influence actors "are manufacturing videos and creating fake articles to undermine the legitimacy of the election, instill fear in voters regarding the election process, and suggest Americans are using violence against each other due to political preferences," read the statement issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI and the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

Federal officials warned that Russia will likely release additional "manufactured content" on Election Day and poses "the most active threat" when it comes to foreign election influence.

The effort described by federal officials is part of a wide-ranging influence operation by Russia designed to undermine confidence in the electoral process and sow discord among American voters. Intelligence agencies have assessed that Russia, which also interfered on Donald Trump's behalf in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, again prefers the Republican nominee and is likely to persist in its influence operations.

Besides manufactured videos intended to promote disinformation, U.S. officials also have accused Russian state media of a covert, multimillion-dollar operation to spread pro-Russia content to American audiences and have seized dozens of internet domains they said fostered propaganda.

In their statement, officials also drew fresh attention to Iran's attempts to interfere in the election, which include a hack-and-leak operation designed to harm Trump's candidacy. The Justice Department in September charged three Iranian hackers in that effort.

Iranian actors also have created fake news sites and impersonated activists online in attempts to sway voters, according to analysts at Microsoft. The tech giant said last month that Iranian actors who allegedly sent emails aimed at intimidating US voters in 2020 have been surveying election-related websites and major media outlets, raising concerns they could be preparing for another scheme this year.

As large tech firms and intelligence officials have called out foreign interference this election cycle, Russia, China and Iran have rejected claims that they are seeking to meddle with the US election.

The Arizona video promoted on social media by Russian actors on Monday purported to show an anonymous whistleblower revealing an election fraud scheme. Federal officials said the Arizona Secretary of State's office had already refuted the content of the video.

US officials confirmed that a video claiming to show voter fraud in two left-leaning counties in Georgia was fake and the product of a Russian troll farm. And last month, they attributed to Russia another fake video of a person tearing up ballots in what appeared to be Bucks County, Pennsylvania. *—PTI*

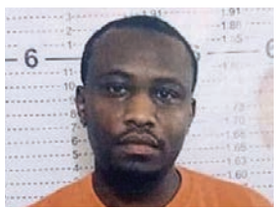


PHOTO: X@THENEWSTRENDING

Kenyan convicted for plotting 9/11 style attack on US

NEW YORK, 5 NOV

A Kenyan man was convicted on Monday of plotting a 9/11-style attack on a US building on behalf of terrorist organisation al-Shabab. A federal jury in Manhattan found Cholo Abdi Abdullah guilty on all six counts he faced for conspiring to hijack an aircraft and slam it into a building, according to court records. He's due to be sentenced next March and faces a mandatory minimum punishment of 20 years in prison. Abdullah represented himself during the trial, which opened last week. He declined to give an opening statement and did not actively participate in questioning witnesses. In court papers filed ahead of the trial, prosecutors said he intended to "sit passively during the trial, not oppose the prosecution." *—PTI*

Indonesia rescuers comb debris after volcanic eruption

MAUMERE, 5 NOV

Rescue workers were sifting through smouldering debris and thick mud in search of survivors on Tuesday, a day after a volcano on Indonesia's remote island of Flores erupted with fury, killing at least nine people with its searing lava and ash. Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki on Monday spewed thick brownish ash as high as 2,000m into the air, and searing lava, gravel and ash were thrown up to 7km from its crater, blanketing nearby villages and towns with tons of volcanic debris and forcing residents to flee. The National Disaster Management Agency on Tuesday lowered the known death toll from an earlier report of 10, after reports that a victim trapped under a collapsed house, who was feared dead, was eventually rescued alive. *—PTI*

William in SA, to attend Earthshot Prize event

CAPE TOWN, 5 NOV

Prince William offered words of encouragement to a group of young environmentalists and later joined a rugby practice at a local school as he began a visit to South Africa on Monday that will focus heavily on climate change and conservation. The Prince of Wales will have four days of engagements in Cape Town, during which he will see his annual Earthshot Prize award $1.2 million in grants to five organizations for innovative environmental ideas. The awards ceremony will take place in a 470-foot reusable dome. The Earthshot awards are the centre piece of William's trip to South Africa's second-biggest city. *—PTI*

Head of Myanmar's military govt visits ally China

BANGKOK, 5 NOV

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of Myanmar's military government, embarked Tuesday on an official visit to China, the country's most important international ally, for several regional meetings. It is the first time Hlaing has travelled to the neighbouring country since his army seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. State-run MRTV television said Hlaing departed on a flight from the capital, Naypyitaw, on Tuesday morning. He will visit the Chinese city of Kunming on Wednesday and Thursday to attend three summits: The Greater Mekong Subregion, the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy and the Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam Cooperation. *—PTI*

Voters enter booths in Pennsylvania's American Legion Post 778 & New Hampshire's Dixville Notcto to cast their ballots on Election Day **PHOTOS: PTI**

US ON CUSP OF HISTORIC PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

If Harris wins, she will be the first woman to be President

WASHINGTON, 5 NOV

The US was on the cusp of a historic presidential election as Republican leader Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Kamala Harris criss-crossed key battleground states and delivered closing remarks ahead of the election day, capping months of intense campaigning.

On the final day of canvassing, former president Trump, known for his aggressive rhetoric, held rallies in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Michigan while Harris addressed supporters in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.

More than 78 million Americans had already cast their votes, according to the University of Florida's Election Lab that tracks early and mail-in voting across the US.

Pennsylvania is the most crucial of the seven battleground states, having 19 electoral college votes, followed by 16 each in North Carolina and Georgia, 15 in Michigan and 11 in Arizona.

Other battleground states Wisconsin has 10 and Nevada has six. The US has 50 states and most of them vote for the same party in every election, except the swing states. Based on the volume of population, the states are assigned electoral college votes. Overall a total of 538 electoral college votes are up for grabs. A candidate with 270 or more electoral votes is declared winner in the election. The election is being billed as historic as it has been one of the tightest presidential races in the past several decades. "This is the most consequential election in our lifetime," senior US senator Bernie Sanders told CNN, while explaining why Trump as president will be detrimental to the US's foundational values. If Harris wins the race, history will be made as she will become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to become the US President. In his rally in Pittsburgh, Trump said, "With your vote tomorrow, we can fix every single problem our country faces and lead America, and indeed the whole world, to new heights of glory." *—PTI*

TEN SENATE RACES TO KEEP AN EYE ON

DEMOCRATS

BERNIE SANDERS, Vermont

Sanders, 83, who is the longest-serving independent in the Congress, is seeking to win a 4th term. He is a democratic socialist who caucuses with the Democrats and came close to winning the prez nomination twice.

JON TESTER, , Montana

Tester, 68, is looking for re-election to a 4th term in the heavily Republican Montana. He has never has never won a race with more than 51% of the vote. He will face Tim Sheehy, former Navy SEAL, backed by Trump.

SHERROD BROWN, Ohio

Brown, 71, is contesting for the third time from here even though Trump has a great deal of support. He has pushed bills to protect American jobs. His opponent, Bernie Moreno, 57, owns a group of car dealerships.

JACKY ROSEN, Nevada

Dem Senator Rosen, 67, is running for a 2nd term. The seat is a top priority for Republicans to flip. Nevada also has a large Latino population. The democrats is repeating her 2022 playbook by focusing on abortion.

TAMMY BALDWIN, Wisconsin

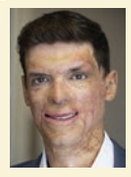
Baldwin, 62, is seeking a 3rd term in a state that is expected to be competitive. She will face Eric Hovde, a Republican. Baldwin supports economically populist bills and helped pass a bill legalising same-sex marriage.

REPUBLICANS

TED CRUZ, Texas

Cruz, 53, is seeking a third term in Congress and is up against Dem's Colin Allred. According to early polls, Cruz might lose the seat while Allred aims to become Texas' first Black senator.

SAM BROWN, Nevada



Brown, 41, served in Afghan war. In 2018, he ran unsuccessfully for Nevada's US Senate nomination. While Rosen seemed to win a re-election, Brown's campaign has gained traction, making it a tighter race.

MIKE ROGERS, Michigan

Rogers, 61, is a former FBI special agent who served in the House for 14 years. He has criticised Trump frequently. But backed Trump's presidential campaign once he launched his Senate bid .

KARI LAKE, Pennsylvania

Lake, 55, is an ex-news anchor and staunch Trump ally. She is up against incumbent Dem Sen.Ruben Gallego. Arizona was Republican until 2016. The race is one of a handful that will determine the Senate majority.

RICK SCOTT, Florida

Scott, 71, is looking to be re-elected to a 2nd term that will put him in a position to earn a Senate leadership role. He is up against former Dem's Debbie Mucarsel, who is seeking an upset victory that could help her party win big.

Qataris vote on Shura Council selection method

DUBAI, 5 NOV

Qatar opened a snap poll Tuesday to decide whether to end its limited voting for legislative seats, a measure likely to pass and end its short-lived experiment in electing members of the country's advisory Shura Council.

The results are expected on Wednesday.

Though Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, announced last month a vote would take place, it was only Sunday that authorities announced the date of the poll.

Qatar's state news agency described the voting as "an enthusiastic atmosphere and a historic moment, clearly confirming everyone's keenness to make this national celebration a success." *—PTI*

AFTER FLIGHT TEST

North Korea fires missiles into sea ahead of US election

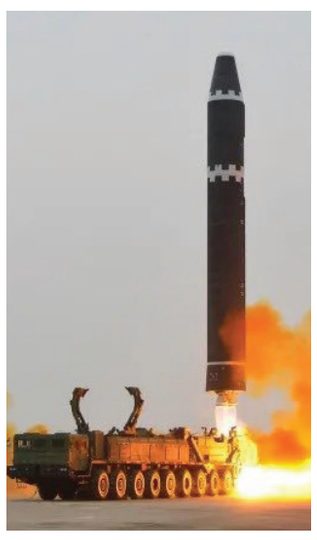
SEOUL, 5 NOV

North Korea on Tuesday fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern sea, the South Korean military said, as the country continued its weapons demonstrations hours before the US presidential election.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't immediately specify the number of missiles detected or how far they flew. Japan's Defence Ministry said the missiles were believed to have already landed at sea and there were no immediate reports of damage.

The launches came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a flight test of the country's newest intercontinental ballistic missile designed to reach the US mainland.

In response, the US flew a long-range B-1B bomber in a trilateral drill with South Korea and Japan on Sunday. That drew condemnation from Kim's powerful sister, who on Tuesday accused North Korea's rivals of raising tensions with "aggressive and adventuristic military threats". South Korean officials have said that North Korea was likely to dial up its military displays around the US presidential election to command the attention of Washington. South Korea's military intelligence agency said last week that North Korea has also likely completed preparations for its seventh nuclear test. Analysts say North Korea eventually hopes to use an expanded nuclear arsenal as leverage to win concessions such as sanctions relief after a new US president is elected. *—PTI*



Kimmy boy Fired a ballistic missile, towards East Sea. **PHOTO: X @MOHSIN_02**

Russia's rocket puts Iranian satellites into orbit

MOSCOW, 5 NOV

A Russian rocket on Tuesday blasted off successfully carrying a pair of Iranian satellites into orbit, a launch that reflected growing cooperation between Moscow and Tehran.

The Soyuz rocket lifted off as scheduled from Vostochny launch pad in far eastern Russia and put its payload into a designated orbit nine minutes after the launch. It was carrying two Russian Ionosphere-M Earth observation satellites and several dozen smaller satellites, including the two Iranian ones.

Iran's two satellites, named Kowsar and Hodhod, were the first launched on behalf of the country's private sector. In 2022, a Russian rocket launched an Iranian Earth observation satellite that was built in Russia on Tehran's order.

Tuesday's launch comes as Russia and Iran have expanded ties in various spheres. Ukraine and the West have accused Tehran of providing Moscow with hundreds of exploding drones for use on the battlefield in Ukraine and helped launch their production in Russia.

The Iranian drone deliveries, which Moscow and Tehran have denied, have allowed for a constant barrage of long-range drone strikes at Ukraine's infrastructure. *—PTI*

Israeli airstrike kills 20, including 6 children in northern Gaza

Tens of thousands of people have fled to nearby Gaza City in the latest wave of displacement in the war **PHOTO: PTI**

DEIR AL-BALAH, 5 NOV

Palestinian medical officials on Tuesday said an Israeli airstrike in the northern Gaza Strip killed at least 20 people, mostly women and children.

Hossam Abu Safiya, the director of a nearby hospital that received the casualties, said the strike late on Monday hit a home in the town of Beit Lahiya, where multiple families were sheltering.

The dead included eight women and six children, according to a list provided by the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Israel has been waging a massive offensive in northern Gaza, already the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the territory, for nearly a month. It has ordered the complete evacuation of Beit Lahiya, the nearby town of Beit Hanoun and the urban Jabaliya refugee camp. Israel has allowed almost no humanitarian aid into the area for over a month.

Tens of thousands of people have fled to nearby Gaza City in the latest wave of displacement in the war, which began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. The attack killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and another 250 people were taken hostage. Around 100 captives are still inside Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. *—PTI*

Iranian FM visits Pak

ISLAMABAD, 5 NOV

Iran's foreign minister arrived in Pakistan's capital on Tuesday for a two-day official visit to discuss a range of issues, including tensions in the Middle East and further improving bilateral ties, officials said on Tuesday. Abbas Araghchi was received by Pakistani officials when his plane landed at an airport near Islamabad. *—PTI*

AFTER 7 WEEKS

Boeing workers end strike, accept new offer

SEATTLE, 5 NOV

Unionised machinists at Boeing voted Monday to accept a contract offer and end their strike after more than seven weeks, clearing the way for the aerospace giant to resume production of its bestselling airliner and generate much-needed cash.

Leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers district in Seattle said 59 per cent of the members who cast ballots agreed to approve the company's fourth formal offer, the third one put to a vote.

The deal includes pay raises of 38 per cent over four years, besides ratification and productivity bonuses.

However, Boeing refused to meet the strikers' demand to restore a company pension plan that was frozen nearly a decade ago.

Boeing refused to meet the strikers' demand to restore a company pension plan **PHOTO: X@ABC7NY**

- According to the union, the 33,000 workers it represents can return to work as soon as Wednesday or as late as 12 November.

The contract's ratification on the eve of the country's election day clears the way for the major US manufacturer and government contractor to restart its Pacific Northwest assembly lines that the factory workers' walkout have idled for 53 days.

According to the union, the 33,000 workers it represents can return to work as soon as Wednesday or as late as 12 November. Boeing's CEO has said it might take "a couple of weeks" to resume production in part because some could need retraining. *—PTI*

Lanka reverses economic reform for IMF relief

COLOMBO, 5 NOV

PHOTO: PTI

The new National People's Power (NPP) government in Sri Lanka on Tuesday announced its first reversal of a key element in the ongoing IMF bailout programme concerning the loss-making state-owned enterprises.

The government reversed the Electricity Act, approved in June this year under then-president Ranil Wickremesinghe's government, introducing major reforms to the state power entity Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB).

The Marxist NPP trade unions had earlier agitated against the bill. A CEB trade union leader who led the agitation is an NPP candidate in the parliamentary election scheduled for November 14.

The CEB said on Monday that the entity's privatisation programme would be scrapped and vowed to amend the CEB Reforms Act of 2024. It ruled out the privatisation of state-owned power plants, transmission and distribution processes.

The Act paved the way for private sector competition in power generation, aimed at easing the burden on public finances and increasing the share of renewable energy to 70 per cent by 2030.

The CEB reforms were a key commitment made by Lanka to the IMF in the USD 3B bailout package. *—PTI*

Gold rises ₹200; silver jumps ₹1,800

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 81,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid fresh buying by local jewellers and retailers and strong global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity retreated from a record high in the national capital on Monday, declining Rs 1,300 to Rs 81,100 per 10 grams. Silver jumped Rs 1,800 to Rs 96,700 per kg on Tuesday. In the previous session, it had closed at Rs 94,900 per kg. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 200 to Rs 80,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 80,700 per 10 grams on Monday. During the day, the precious metal hit a high of Rs 78,580 per 10 grams and a low of Rs 78,191 per 10 grams. —*PTI*

L&T eyes 21% stake in E2E Networks

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Tuesday said it will acquire 21 per cent stake in E2E Networks Ltd, a cloud services company, for Rs 1,407.02 crore. This will increase the company's reach in cloud and AI services – the key growth areas in the technology sector. "The company has entered into an investment agreement on November 5, 2024 for the acquisition of up to 21 per cent stake in E2E Networks Ltd," L&T said in a regulatory filing. It will make an investment of Rs 1,079.27 crore for a 15 per cent stake via preferential allotment and Rs 327.75 crore for an additional six per cent stake through secondary acquisition, the filing said. The acquisition is likely to be completed by 31 December.The infrastructure company will not acquire control in E2E Networks and will be a minority shareholder with certain protective rights. —*PTI*

Saregama India reports 6.2% fall in net profit

KOLKATA, 5 NOV

Music label Saregama India Ltd on Tuesday reported a 6.2 per cent fall in its net profit to Rs 44.95 crore for the second quarter of the 2024–25 financial year despite a 40.5 per cent increase in revenue. Saregama India, which is a part of the RP Sanjiv Goenka Group, posted a net profit of Rs 47.99 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal, a statement said. The company reported a revenue of Rs 241.83 crore during the quarter that ended on September 30 as against Rs 172.35 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal. During the quarter, operational costs more than doubled to Rs 87.12 crore from Rs 40.60 crore. Total expenses were at Rs 195 crore during the quarter as against Rs 119.95 crore in the year-ago period. —*PTI*

Finmin initiates 4th phase of RRBs consolidation

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

In a bid to achieve operational efficiency and cost rationalisation, the Finance Ministry has initiated the fourth round of consolidation for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and the number of such banks is likely to come down to 28 from 43 at present. According to the roadmap prepared by the Finance Ministry in consultation with NABARD, 15 RRBs operating in various states would be merged. These states include Andhra Pradesh, which has the maximum number of RRBs (4), Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (3 each), and Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan (2 each). In the case of Telangana, the amalgamation of RRBs will be subject to bifurcation of assets and liabilities of Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB) between APGVB and Telangana Grameena Bank. The Department of Financial Services has sought comments by November 20. —*PTI*

Trump policies may hit IT employees hard: Report

His policies could lead to high denial rates for H-1B & L-1 visas

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The outcome of the upcoming US presidential election holds significant implications for employment-based immigration, particularly concerning H-1B visas, highlighted a report by the JM Financial.

The report noted that if Donald Trump were to regain power, his administration's previous restrictive policies could resurface, potentially leading to increased scrutiny and denial rates for H-1B and L-1 visas.

During his first term, initial denial rates for H-1B visas surged from 4 per cent to 17 per cent, while L-1 visa denials rose from 12 per cent to 28 per cent. This trend could re-emerge, impacting IT services firms that heavily rely on these visas.

The report said, "In his first term, Trump, through his executive order EO 13788 'Buy American and Hire American', increased restrictions on H-1B visas."

Republican candidate Donald Trump PHOTO: PTI

However, the landscape has changed since Trump's first term. Many IT services companies have significantly reduced their dependency on H-1B visas, with estimates suggesting that the ratio of visa-dependent employees has declined from 65 per cent to below 50 per cent in recent years.

This shift insulates these firms from potential spikes in denial rates, as they have increasingly localized their workforce in the US.

Moreover, Trump's administration previously attempted to implement policies that would raise minimum wage requirements for H-1B visa holders, pricing some employers out of the market.

Although these measures were blocked in court, they could serve as precursors to future restrictive policies if Trump returns to office.

- Trump's administration previously attempted to implement policies that would raise minimum wage requirements for H-1B visa holders, pricing some employers out of the market

The report said, "...Trump's Presidency, while headline negative, will have limited impact on India IT Services players. Harris Presidency, on the other hand, will largely be status quo, in our view".

The evolving legislative landscape, including bipartisan bills aimed at reforming the immigration process, could also play a role in shaping the future of high-skilled immigration in the US. —*PTI*

BUYING IN METAL & IT SHARES

Mkt stages recovery; Sensex up 694 points

MUMBAI, 5 NOV

PHOTO: X

Benchmark Sensex recovered its early losses to close higher by 694 points on Tuesday on late buying in banking, steel and oil & gas shares amid firm trends in global equities ahead of the US presidential elections.

Bouncing back from Monday's sharp fall, the BSE Sensex jumped 694.39 points or 0.88 per cent to settle at 79,476.63. During the day, it soared 740.89 points or 0.94 per cent to 79,523.13.

The NSE Nifty climbed 217.95 points or 0.91 per cent to settle at 24,213.30 as 39 of its constituents advanced 11 declined.

Stock markets opened on a weak note and traded in a range with a negative bias in the first half as investors turned cautious ahead of the US presidential elections. Sensex hit a low of 78,296.70 while Nifty touched 23,842.75. Value buying in the afternoon session helped indices recover losses and closed in the green.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, JSW Steel surged nearly 5 per cent while Tata Steel jumped nearly 4 per cent. Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, Kotak Mahindra Bank and UltraTech Cement were also among the big gainers.

Adani Ports, ITC, Bharti Airtel and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.48 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.41 per cent. IT, Teck and services were the laggards. A total of 2,468 stocks advanced while 1,478 declined and 112 remained unchanged. —*PTI*

IN A BOUNCE BACK

Rupee up 1 Paisa to settle at 84.10 against dollar

MUMBAI, 5 NOV

The rupee recovered from its all-time low level to settle 1 paisa higher at 84.10 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, supported by a recovery in the domestic markets and suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Forex traders said investors were cautious ahead of the US presidential election. Markets are bracing for potential volatility over the coming days, especially with the Federal Reserve's monetary policy announcement also scheduled this week.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.13 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency oscillated between a high of 84.10 and a low of 84.13. It finally settled at 84.10 (provisional), 1 paisa higher from its previous close.

Forex traders said investors were cautious ahead of the US presidential election PHOTO: PTI

On Monday, the rupee fell 4 paise to close at a record low level of 84.11 against the US dollar.

"Indian rupee touched fresh record lows amid uncertainty over US elections and FII outflows. Elevated crude oil prices also weighed on the rupee. However, weak US Dollar and positive domestic markets prevented a sharp fall in the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, a research analyst at Sharekhan.

Choudhary said the rupee was likely to trade with a negative bias on FII outflows and overall strength in the US Dollar. —*PTI*

SEBI asks Embassy Office to remove its CEO

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

SEBI on Monday ordered the suspension of Aravind Maiya, the CEO of Embassy REIT manager firm Embassy Office Parks Management Services, and appoint an interim CEO with immediate effect.

SEBI's direction follows a National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) order that barred Maiya for 10 years from undertaking any audit in respect of financial statements or internal audit of the functions and activities of any company or body corporate. It also imposed Rs 50 lakh penalty on Maiya.

The Embassy Office Parks "is directed to suspend Aravind Maiya from acting as its CEO and appoint an interim CEO with immediate effect, in compliance with applicable laws including 'fit and proper person' criteria, till further directions, or till the NFRA Order dated August 19, 2024 is stayed/set aside, whichever is earlier," SEBI said.

The direction will take effect immediately and will be in force until further orders.

PHOTO: X

In a regulatory filing, Embassy Office Parks REIT said, "While we are reviewing the order and evaluating all options, in compliance with SEBI's directive, effective immediately, Aravind Maiya will be stepping down as CEO of Embassy REIT."

It added that Maiya would assume the role of the head of strategy for Embassy REIT.

Embassy Office Parks Management Services Pvt Ltd (EOPMSPL) is the manager of Embassy Office Parks REIT, which was sponsored by Bengaluru-based realty firm Embassy Group and global investment firm Blackstone. —*PTI*

CBDT let tax officials waive or reduce interest

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), through a circular dated November 4, has allowed tax officials to either waive or reduce interest payable by a taxpayer, subject to specified conditions. It also set the monetary threshold for the waiver or reduction.

Accordingly, a principal chief commissioner-rank officer will decide on interest due of over Rs 1.5 crore. While a chief commissioner-rank officer will decide on interest dues from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore, principal commissioners and income tax commissioners can decide on interest due up to Rs 50 lakh.

The reduction or waiver under Section 220(2A) would be subject to three specified conditions – payment of such amount has caused or would cause genuine hardship to the assessee; the default was caused by circumstances beyond the control of the assessee. —*PTI*

Anti-dumping duty on PVC resins from 7 nations

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), the commerce ministry's investigation arm, has recommended imposition of an anti-dumping duty of up to USD 339 per tonne on imports of PVC resins from seven countries, including China, the US and Korea, with a view to guard domestic producers.

The DGTR has found that PVC suspension resins have been exported to India at a price below the normal value, resulting in dumping. It said that the imports from these countries – China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea RP, Taiwan, Thailand and the US – have caused material injury to the domestic industry.

"Accordingly, the authority recommends imposition of provisional anti-dumping duty on the imports," it has said.

The recommended duty ranges between USD 25 per tonne and USD 339 per tonne.

The DGTR conducted the probe following applications regarding the same from domestic players, including DCM Shriram and DCW Limited. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Oil prices will remain stable, says Puri

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Oil prices in India are expected to remain stable amid the rising geopolitical tensions as the country has several options to buy crude oil, said Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri in a social media post.

Addressing concerns over potential supply chain disruptions, Puri said India has strategically positioned itself to manage such situations effectively, with access to a diverse range of crude oil suppliers.

"More supplies from countries such as Brazil and Guyana are coming into the market. Currently, the global supply of oil outpaces the consumption ensuring a stable market," Puri said on Tuesday. "Despite geopolitical tensions in some parts of the world, there is no shortage of crude oil in the world. Consuming countries have several options to choose from."

The minister said global oil supply continued to outpace demand, which should contribute to maintaining a stable market and prices in the foreseeable future. Indian oil companies will continue to prioritize economic benefits by sourcing crude from suppliers that offer the most competitive prices. —*ANI*

$15 MILLION PENALTY

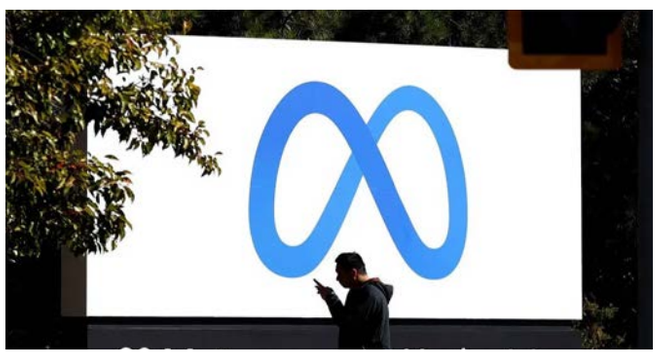
S Korea fines Meta for leaking FB user info

SEOUL, 5 NOV

South Korea's privacy watchdog on Tuesday fined social media company Meta 21.6 billion won ($15 million) for illegally collecting sensitive personal information from Facebook users, including data about their political views and sexual orientation, and sharing it with thousands of advertisers.

It was the latest in a series of penalties against Meta by South Korean authorities in recent years as they increase their scrutiny of how the company, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, handles private information.

Following a four-year investigation, South Korea's Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC) had concluded that Meta unlawfully collected sensitive information about around 9,80,000 Facebook users, including their religion, political views and whether they were in same-sex unions.



Following a 4-year investigation, Meta unlawfully collected sensitive information about around 9,80,000 Facebook users PHOTO: X

The investigation was conducted from July 2018 to March 2022. The PIPC said Meta shared the data with around 4,000 advertisers.

South Korea's privacy law provides strict protection for information related to personal beliefs, political views and sexual behaviour. It bars companies from processing or using such data without the specific consent of the person involved.

The commission said Meta categorized ads to identify users interested in themes such as specific religions, same-sex and transgender issues, and issues related to North Korean escapees, said Lee Eun Jung, a director at the PIPC, who led the investigation on Meta.

"While Meta collected this sensitive information and used it for individualised services, they made only vague mentions of this use in their data policy and did not obtain specific consent," Lee said.

Lee also said Meta put the privacy of Facebook users at risk by failing to implement basic security measures, which helped hackers use inactive pages to forge identities and request password resets for the accounts of other Facebook users. Meta approved these requests without proper verification, which resulted in data breaches, Lee said. —*PTI*

Centre rolls out Bharat rice, flour sale Phase-II

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The government on Tuesday launched the Phase-II retail sales of wheat flour and rice under the Bharat brand at subsidised rates to provide relief to consumers from high prices.

The wheat flour (atta) will be sold at Rs 30 per kg and rice at Rs 34 per kg in 5kg and 10kg packets through cooperatives NCCF, Nafed and Kendriya Bhandar and e-commerce platforms.

"This is a temporary intervention to provide relief to consumers," Food Minister Pralhad Joshi said after flagging off the mobile vans of these cooperatives.

The government has allocated 3.69 lakh tonne wheat and 2.91 lakh tonne rice from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for the Phase-II retail intervention under the Price Stabilisation Fund.

"This intervention will continue till the allocated stock is exhausted. If more is required, we have enough stock to allocate again," Joshi said, adding that the government would consider introducing smaller pack sizes if demanded.

PHOTO: X

Under the new pricing structure, the wheat flour will be available in 5kg and 10kg packs at Rs 30 per kg, while rice will be sold at Rs 34 per kg – a slight increase from Phase-I rates of Rs 27.5 and Rs 29 per kg, respectively. —*ANI*

PHOTO: X

Jangra clinches WBF super featherweight title

LONDON, 5 NOV

Indian professional boxer Mandeep Jangra won the World Boxing Federation's super featherweight world title after defeating Britain's Conor in the Cayman Islands. The 31-year-old, who trains under former Olympic silver medallist Roy Jones Jr and has faced only one defeat in his professional career so far, had the upper hand in most rounds. He delivered powerful punches from the outset, maintaining his stamina throughout the 10 rounds, while the British boxer struggled to keep pace. Conor did try to make a comeback, but Jangra continued to maintain the upper hand in most rounds. —*PTI*

HIL 2024-25: Delhi to face Gonasika on 28 December

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

Hockey India League (HIL) on Tuesday announced the schedule for the 2024-2025 season with Delhi SG Pipers and Gonasika locking horns in the men's tournament at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela on 28 December. After a seven-year hiatus, HIL is making its comeback with an expanded format that includes both men's and, for the first time, an exclusive women's league, running concurrently. The men's league will begin on December 28 in Rourkela, with matches continuing through two stages until the showdown on 1 February. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Malaysia-Friendly: Yadwad earns maiden call

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

India's defensive stalwart Sandesh Jhingan, sidelined with a knee injury since January, is set for a comeback as he was on Tuesday named in a 26-member probables list for India's home friendly against Malaysia on November 18 in Hyderabad. Jhingan, who missed the Asian Cup and the remainder of the ISL season due to the injury, has been named in a 26-member probables list for India's home friendly against Malaysia, scheduled for 18 November in Hyderabad.India head coach Manolo Márquez, still searching for his first win since taking over from Igor Stimac in July, has also given a maiden national call-up to promising forward Irfan Yadwad of Chennaiyin FC. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Sabalenka beats Paolini in straight sets

RIYADH, 5 NOV

Aryna Sabalenka reached the semifinals of the WTA Finals with a 6-3, 7-5 win over Jasmine Paolini on Monday for a second straight victory in the group stage. The top-ranked Sabalenka cruised in the first set after building a 4-0 lead, then saved two set points in the second to advance to the year-ending tournament for the top eight ranked players. Sabalenka will face Elena Rybakina, who has already been eliminated, on Wednesday in the final group match of the week. Sabalenka has won 22 of her last 23 matches and three of the previous four tournaments in which she played. —*PTI*

India makes bid to host 2036 Olympics, Paralympics

India sends 'letter of intent' to International Olympic Committe

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

India has submitted a 'Letter of Intent', expressing its desire to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to the International Olympic Committee's Future Host Commission, taking the first concrete step in an ambitious plan after months of informal dialogue with the IOC.

The letter was submitted by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on October 1, according to a source in the sports ministry.

"This monumental opportunity could bring substantial benefits, fostering economic growth, social progress, and youth empowerment across the country," the source added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had first talked about his government's aspiration to host the 2036 Olympics last year.

A decision on the host will not be taken before the IOC elections next year and India will also have to face competition from several other nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, who are positioning themselves as strong contenders to host the sporting spectacle.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had first talked about his government's aspiration to host the 2036 Olympics last year PHOTO: PTI

However, with the submission of a 'Letter of Intent', the nation has progressed from "Informal Dialogue" to the "Continuous Dialogue" stage of the host election process.

In this stage, the IOC conducts a "feasibility study" of the progress of projects associated with the Games in the potential host.

"As part of the Feasibility Assessment, independent sources in a wide-ranging number of areas are taken into consideration, including in human rights, through Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), and sustainability, through the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)," the IOC states on its official website.

The next phase of the process would be "Targeted Dialogue", which would require the submission of an edition-specific formal bid, which would be assessed by the Future Host Commission. The process would finally end with a host election.

- The next phase of the process would be "Targeted Dialogue", which would require the submission of an edition-specific formal bid, which would be assessed by the Future Host Commission. The process would finally end with a host election.

India's plan has been backed by current IOC head Thomas Bach. The last time India hosted an international multi-sport extravaganza was the 2010 Commonwealth Games here.

But for the 2036 Olympics, Ahmedabad is being seen as a front-runner to be the host city. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier this year to lobby for the country. —*PTI*

CHENNAI GRAND MASTERS

Arjun Erigaisi to face Gujarathi in opening round

CHENNAI, 5 NOV

World No. 4 Indian chess grandmaster and top seed Arjun Erigaisi will open his Chennai Grand Masters campaign against compatriot Vidit Gujarathi, starting here on Tuesday.

Erigaisi will play for the first time in India after crossing the historic 2800 ELO ranking mark when he takes the board.

The eight-player strong classical event will see Aravindh Chithambaram take on Iranian Amin Tabatabaei, Vachier-Lagrave Maxime will face Maghsoodloo Parham, and American Grandmaster Levon Aronian will play Alexey Sarana in the opening round. The second edition of the seven-round competition will also feature a Challengers event featuring female players for the first time.

Organized by MGD1 with ChessBase India, and sponsored by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, the tournament will be held at the 1,100-seat Anna Centenary Library.

The event will also feature two Indian women -- Harika Dronavalli and Vaishali Rameshbabu.

The Challengers participants will fight for a prize pool of Rs 20 lakh, with the winner taking home Rs six lakh and a direct berth in the Masters next year. In the Challenger category, Vaishali will take on Mendonca Leon Luke while Harika will play Pranav V.

In the other two matches, Raunak Sadhwani will face off against Karthikeyan Murali while Pranesh M will play against Abhimanyu Puranik.

The Challengers event, which is introduced this year, will give Indian prodigies the chance to compete in top-level tournaments. —*PTI*

Kaur is 9th, Smriti remains 4th in women's ODI rankings

DUBAI, 5 NOV

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur climbed to the joint ninth spot while opener Smriti Mandhana remained fourth in the latest ICC Women's ODI rankings, released here on Tuesday.

Kaur, who played an important part in her team's six-wicket victory over New Zealand in the third ODI of their ICC Women's Championship series in Ahmedabad, had slipped three slots after the first two matches.

However, her 59 not out of 63 balls pushed her back into the top 10.

Left-hander Mandhana, who won the Player of the Match award for her knock of 100, added 23 rating points to reach a tally of 728, just five less than Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu in the list led by Natalie Sciver-Brunt of England with 760 rating points.

Wicketkeeper Yastika Bhatia moved up from 48th to 45th after chipping in with 35 runs, while for New Zealand, Brooke Halliday's knock of 86 lifted her 12 spots to 24th position and Georgia Plimmer's 39 runs took her from 85th to 74th position.

In the bowling chart, seasoned spinner Deepti Sharma gained important rating points after helping India win the series 2-1. —*PTI*

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Boland looks to keep Rahul under pressure

MELBOURNE, 5 NOV

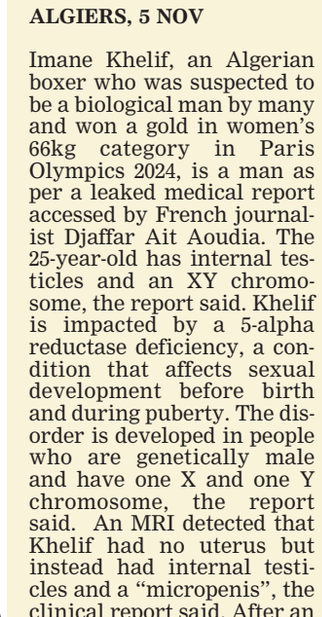
Australian pacer Scott Boland wants to extend the barren run of KL Rahul and keep him under pressure ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy when he faces the Indian batter in the four-day A-Team match here from Thursday.

Rahul along with wicket-keeper batter Dhruv Jurel flew early to Australia and will appear for India A in the second four-day game at the MCG.

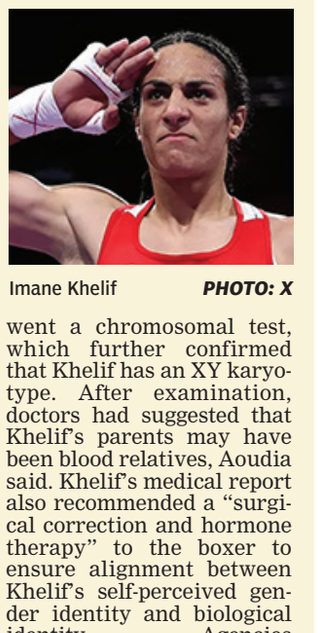
"I was lucky to bowl to him in a Test over in India a couple of years ago but it'll be nice to play against him in our backyard," Boland was quoted saying by ESPNCricinfo.

Rahul made a hundred on his debut tour to Australia in 2015, a 110 at Sydney, but his overall performance Down Under remains scratchy, evidenced by an average of 20.77 across four Tests.

Rahul was dropped from India's eleven after the first Test against New Zealand at Bengaluru where he made 0 and 12. It was a continuation of his modest run since cracking a hundred against South Africa at Centurion in December 2023.



Scott Boland and KL Rahul PHOTO: PTI



Since then, he made just two fifties across nine innings against SA, England, Bangladesh, and New Zealand.

- "I was lucky to bowl to him in a Test over in India a couple of years ago but it'll be nice to play against him in our backyard," Boland was quoted saying by ESPNCricinfo.

But the Bengaluru man could return to the eleven if skipper Rohit Sharma skips the first Test against the Aussies at Perth, starting from November 22, owing to personal reasons.

Boland also remained cautious about the impact of India's recent 0-3 whitewash at home by the Kiwis.

The 35-year-old said India has enough experience to make a comeback.

"There's so much more bounce here, more seam. The way they'll structure their team (in Australia) will be completely different to what you see over in India," he noted. —*PTI*

Title-holder Novak Djokovic withdraws from ATP Finals due to injury

BELGRADE, 5 NOV

Novak Djokovic won't defend his ATP Finals title after ruling himself out on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.

Djokovic wrote in an Instagram story, "I was looking forward to being there, but due to ongoing injury I won't be playing next week. Apologies to those who were planning to see me." The year-end, eight-man ATP Finals open in Turin, Italy, on Sunday. He's won it a record seven times. Last year, he beat current No. 1 Jake Sinner in the final. "Wishing all the players a great tournament" Djokovic added: "See you soon!"

Djokovic finishes the year with a 37-9 win-loss record highlighted by winning his first Olympic gold medal in Paris. That was his 99th tour-level title. He didn't add to his men's record 24 Grand Slam titles this year, and after bowing out of the US Open third round, he played only a Davis Cup match and reached the final of the Shanghai Masters last month, losing to Sinner. He then withdrew injured from the Paris Masters. —*PTI*

- Djokovic wrote in an Instagram story, "I was looking forward to being there, but due to ongoing injury I won't be playing next week.

Novak Djokovic

Boxer Imane is 'biological male': Report

ALGIERS, 5 NOV

Imane Khelif, an Algerian boxer who was suspected to be a biological man by many and won a gold in women's 66kg category in Paris Olympics 2024, is a man as per a leaked medical report accessed by French journalist Djaffar Ait Aoudia. The 25-year-old has internal testicles and an XY chromosome, the report said. Khelif is impacted by a 5-alpha reductase deficiency, a condition that affects sexual development before birth and during puberty. The disorder is developed in people who are genetically male and have one X and one Y chromosome, the report said. An MRI detected that Khelif had no uterus but instead had internal testicles and a "micropenis", the clinical report said. After an MRI test, Khelif also underwent a chromosomal test, which further confirmed that Khelif has an XY karyotype. After examination, doctors had suggested that Khelif's parents may have been blood relatives, Aoudia said. Khelif's medical report also recommended a "surgical correction and hormone therapy" to the boxer to ensure alignment between Khelif's self-perceived gender identity and biological identity. —Agencies

Imane Khelif PHOTO: X

IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on 24, 25 November

NEW DELHI, 5 NOV

The mega auction ahead of the Indian Premier League 2025 will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 24 and 25 Nov, the BCCI announced on Tuesday. This is the second successive year the auction is being held overseas as Dubai hosted the previous one ahead of the IPL 2024. The player registration officially closed on Monday and a total of 1,574 cricketers (1,165 Indian and 409 overseas) have been signed up for the auction, which will clash with the third and fourth day's play of the first Test between India and Australia in Perth, which begins on 22 November. Each franchise will be able to form a maximum squad of 25 players (including respective retained players), and a total of 204 slots will be up for grabs from the auction. —*PTI*

4TH F1 TITLE

Verstappen's Brazil victory silences critics

SAO PAULO, 5 NOV

Max Verstappen's come-from-behind win in the pouring rain at the Brazilian Grand Prix didn't just put him a lot closer to a fourth straight Formula One title.

After 10 races without a win, it also reminded everyone of why the Dutch driver is a three-time champion in the first place. Verstappen delivered one of the best performances of his career to move up from 17th at the start and clinch a victory that increased his lead over McLaren's Lando Norris from 44 to 62 points with just three grand prix races and a sprint race remaining.

"Simply lovely," Verstappen summed it up on the team radio. His fellow drivers were more effusive. "Amazing," said seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes.

"Incredible," gushed Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

"Fantastic," added Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, a two-time F1 champion.

The only dissenting voice was Norris, who started on pole but finished sixth and later argued that the race was decided by luck as his team made a pit stop just before a red flag came out. "He drove well, he got a bit lucky," Norris said. "You take a gamble, and it has paid off for them. It is not talent; it is just luck."

With only 86 points up for grabs until the end of the season, Verstappen only needs to finish ahead of Norris in Las Vegas to secure the title in two weeks.The Red Bull driver had expected a tough weekend at Interlagos. He received a five-place grid penalty after changing his engine for the sixth time in the season; lost one point in Saturday's sprint race because of another penalty; and got unlucky during qualifying when the session was interrupted just as he was attempting to clock a fast lap, leaving him in 12th place. —*PTI*

Genoa beat Parma as Balotelli plays Serie A

LONDON, 5 NOV

Mario Balotelli made his first Serie A appearance in four years when he came on as a late substitute in Genoa's 1-0 win over Parma on Monday and earned a yellow card within five minutes. c The former Italy international signed with relegation-threatened Genoa last week, having last played in Italy's top division with hometown club Brescia in 2019-20.

Parma's winless streak reached nine games with the loss, even though the host had the best of the first half with Valentin Mihaila and Anas Haj Mohamed coming close to opening the scoring.

But Genoa took control after the break as Morten Thorsby had a goal disallowed after 49 minutes and Andrea Pinamonti hit the post shortly after. Pinamonti scored the winner with 11 minutes remaining when he slotted home the rebound from Jeff Ekhator's low shot. It was Genoa's first win since beating Monza on 24 Aug. and moved it off the bottom of the standings and into 17th place. —*PTI*